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AN

# Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory,

ANTIENT AND MODERN,

FROM

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST,

TO THE

BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT CENTURY:

IN WHICH

The Riſe, Progreſs, and Variations of CHURCH POWER

ARE CONSIDERED

In their Connexion with the State of LEARNING and PHILOSOPHY, and the POLITICAL HISTORY of EUROPE during that Period.

By the late learned

JOHN LAWRENCE MOSHEIM, D.D.

And Chancellor of the Univerſity of GOTTINGEN.

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Tranſlated from the ORIGINAL LATIN,

And accompanied with NOTES and CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES,

By ARCHIBALD MACLAINE, D.D.

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IN SIX VOLUMES.

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To the whole is added AN ACCURATE INDEX.

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A NEW EDITION

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VOL. I.

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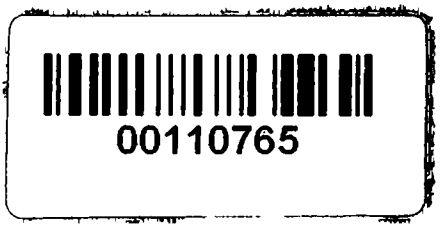

# ADVERTISEMENT

## TO THE

# SECOND EDITION.

THE favourable reception which the *firſt* edition of this work met with, has encouraged the Tranſlator to employ his utmoſt care in rendering the *ſecond* ſtill leſs unworthy of the acceptance of the Public. He has corrected a paſſage erroneouſly tranſlated in the ſecond volume, at the 574th page of the quarto edition; and he has reviſed the whole with a degree of attention, which he hopes will ſecure him againſt the charge of any other inadvertency. He takes this opportunity of acknowledging the goodneſs of the learned and worthy Dr. NEVE of *Middleton Stoney*, who favoured him with ſeveral Notes, and with ſome hundreds of Additional Articles

and Corrections for the INDEX. Many of theſe are inſerted in this edition, and an N. ſubjoined to each, to diſtinguiſh them from thoſe of the Tranſlator.

TO

HIS MOST SERENE HIGHNESS

# WILLIAM V,

PRINCE OF ORANGE AND NASSAU,

HEREDITARY STADTHOLDER,

CAPTAIN-GENERAL AND ADMIRAL

OF THE UNITED PROVINCES, &c.

SIR,

I CANNOT but eſteem it the higheſt honour to be permitted to give your SERENE HIGHNESS a public teſtimony of my homage and reſpect, by laying the following work at your feet. Teſtimonies, indeed, of this kind, when offered to Princes, are generally attended with ſuch high ſtrains of panegyric, as have contributed to render the credibility of *Dedications* more than dubious. The abuſe of a cuſtom, originally deſigned to pay a juſt tribute of applauſe to the great and good, to the patrons of religion, virtue, liberty, and letters, has been ſo common, and the proſtitution of it ſo notorious, that, if the language of *Dedica-*

*tions* were alone to be conſulted, it would be difficult to diſtinguiſh a *Nero* from a *Trajan*, a *Philip the Second* from a PRINCE OF ORANGE.

IT is certain, SIR, that we live in an age in which the merit of Princes is not appreciated by the reports of an oracle, whoſe deciſions are ſo often found to be falſe and deluſive; but by the luſtre of their domeſtic virtues, the wiſdom of their public meaſures, and the general tenor of their conduct and actions: and I know, MOST SERENE PRINCE, that, in the high ſphere of action to which Providence is leading you with ſuch diſtinguiſhed marks of protection and favour, you deſire to be judged by no other *Criterion*. I know, that both precept and example have pointed out to you the path to true glory; that your virtuous heart has reliſhed their leſſons; and that the love of fame, which even Heroes have acknowledged as the ſole ſpring of their conduct, will be, with you, but a ſubordinate motive to reduce theſe leſſons to practice.

WERE I capable of drawing with the ſtricteſt truth the Portrait of your SERENE HIGHNESS, I ſhould ſcarcely think it expedient to place it here, for the reaſons already mentioned. Beſides, thoſe (if any ſuch there be) who are yet unacquainted with the *joyful* and *general* hopes this Republic entertains in the proſpect of your approaching

approaching Government, would look upon the truth as exaggeration, and, not knowing the obſcure perſon that pronounced it, perhaps as flattery; while thoſe judges of true merit, who have the honour to approach your SERENE HIGHNESS, would certainly find the Portrait defective.

BUT while I with-hold, MOST SERENE PRINCE, that tribute of praiſe that is due to your early merit, and which, I am perſuaded, your virtuous ambition deſires rather to deſerve ſtill farther than to receive at preſent, there are certain effuſions of the heart, which neither my character as a Chriſtian miniſter, nor as a citizen of this Republic, will permit me to ſuppreſs on this occaſion. I cannot conceal thoſe feelings, which ſo naturally ariſe from a view of the goodneſs of the Divine Providence to this Nation, in the maintenance of your Illuſtrious Houſe, the preſervation of your precious days, and the education your SERENE HIGHNESS has received under the tender and wiſe inſpection of that great and good Prince, who bears with ſuch dignity the glorious name of BRUNSWICK. It is with inexpreſſible joy, that we ſee this reſpectable guide pointing out to you the Heroes that you are more peculiarly called to imitate, in that glorious line of anceſtors who have gone

gone before you to immortality, and performing with a truly parental affection that important taſk, that was for ſo ſhort a ſpace intruſted with thoſe illuſtrious Parents, of whom you were deprived in the very dawn of life. But it is with ſingular feelings of ſatisfaction and delight, that we behold in your SERENE HIGHNESS the fruits of an excellent education growing to a happy maturity, and promiſing a new period of proſperity and glory to a Republic, founded by a PRINCE OF ORANGE, whoſe venerable name and heroic deeds will ſhine in the annals of public liberty and public virtue, as long as the ſacred names of liberty and virtue ſhall be known among men.

THE work I here humbly preſent to your SERENE HIGHNESS, is the *Hiſtory of the Chriſtian Religion*; that Divine Religion, which you, SIR, have ſtudied with uncommon application, judgment, and ſucceſs. It is upon good grounds that I make this declaration, as I, myſelf, had the honour of being a witneſs to your remarkable progreſs in religious knowledge on that memorable day, when, before an illuſtrious aſſembly of the States of this Nation, you gave publicly *a reaſon of the faith that is in you*, and excited the admiration of thoſe that were preſent on this ſolemn occaſion. It is not, therefore, without a certain degree of pro-

priety, that I addreſs to your SERENE HIGHNESS the tranſlation of an important work, which has the Hiſtory of Religion for its object. It is true, the language of the original is perfectly familiar to your SERENE HIGHNESS; I would, nevertheleſs, hope that the Tranſlation may not be entirely unworthy of your attention, if my zealous endeavours to render it ſtill more intereſting than the original have not been utterly unſucceſsful.

IF your SERENE HIGHNESS deigns to peruſe the following work, which is certainly compoſed with more judgment and freedom than any Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory that has hitherto appeared, you will find in it a great variety of objects, all inſtructive, though not, indeed, equally pleaſing. You will ſee, on the one hand, the religion of JESUS riſing upon a benighted world, ſtriking conviction into the hearts of mortals by the irreſiſtible luſtre of its divine truths, conquering the paſſions and prejudices of men, confounding the oppoſition of Nations and Empires, furniſhing new ſupports to civil and ſocial virtue, and unfolding thoſe ſublime doctrines and maxims that tend to the perfection of human nature, and the happineſs of human ſociety. But you will alſo obſerve, on the other hand, the lamentable changes that have been introduced into the church,

church, in conſequence of the corruption of men, the ambition of a licentious and deſpotic prieſthood, and the bigotry and tyranny of ignorant and wicked ſovereigns. Your SERENE HIGHNESS will alſo ſee, in the following work, the happy events that have ariſen, at certain periods, from the efforts of a wiſe, pious, learned, and moderate clergy, ſeconded by the influence and authority of religious Princes, whoſe counſels and examples have always a commanding power, that enables them to do good with a facility peculiar to them alone. This part of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, I am perſuaded, SIR, you will read with pleaſure, and not without a noble ſpirit of emulation. But your SERENE HIGHNESS will obſerve, with a generous concern, that theſe efforts have not been ſufficient to extinguiſh that unhappy ſpirit of Fanaticiſm, of whoſe deplorable effects the learned author has exhibited ſuch a ſtriking picture; and you will find, in all ages of the church, enthuſiaſtical ſects ſtriking out new forms of religion, by working on the paſſions of the ignorant and unwary, and deriving their rules of faith and manners from the fallacious ſuggeſtions of a warm imagination, rather than from the clear and infallible dictates of the word of God. Your SERENE HIGHNESS will ſee, in the courſe of this Hiſtory, various abuſes, which the true and

judicious friends of Chriſtianity will ſeriouſly lay to heart. You will ſee one ſet of men covering religion with a tawdry habit of type and allegory; another converting it into an inſtrument of diſſenſion and diſcord: and your diſcerning mind will eaſily obſerve the unhappy conſequences of departing from the divine ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and loading its pure and heavenly doctrines with the inventions and *commandments of men*. Finally, SIR, you will ſee in the following work, the tendency of *true religion* to ſtrengthen the ſprings of government, by purifying the motives, and animating the zeal of thoſe that govern, to promote thoſe virtues that exalt a nation, by rendering its inhabitants good ſubjects and true patriots, and by confirming all the reſpectable bonds and obligations of civil ſociety. Here more particularly, your SERENE HIGHNESS will be fixed in the belief of one important truth, which no wiſe and good Prince will ever loſe ſight of, that *the enemies of religion are the enemies of mankind*; and that it is the *natural tendency* of *infidelity* and licentiouſneſs to *diſſolve* the moſt ſacred obligations, to *remove* the moſt powerful motives to virtue, and, by *corrupting the principles of individuals, to poiſon the ſources of public order and public proſperity*.

As

As you are called, SIR, by the voice of Divine Providence, to watch over the proſperity of theſe United Provinces, to be the guardian of their privileges, and the ornament and defender of their pure and holy Religion, theſe conſiderations muſt naturally make a deep impreſſion on your mind. They will certainly influence the meaſures your SERENE HIGHNESS will, one day, employ for promoting the happineſs of the ſtate, increaſing the purity and luſtre of the church, and advancing the intereſts of the Redeemer's kingdom, which is a kingdom of *righteouſneſs*, *charity*, and *truth*.

MAY the God, by whom Kings reign and Princes decree juſtice, ſtrengthen your hands for performing with dignity this important taſk! May he prolong your days, and render them ever precious to the people of this land! May you be the illuſtrious inſtrument of his wiſdom and power, for reſtraining the growth of impiety, and covering licentiouſneſs and vice with that infamy and confuſion which are their juſt and natural reward! May religion and virtue flouriſh under your influence, and derive a commanding authority from your pious example! May public ſpirit, with the arts and ſciences, acquire new vigour under your auſpicious protection! And when, after a long courſe

courſe of days, crowned with public proſperity and domeſtic happineſs, you ſhall be called from the tranſitory ſcene of human grandeur, to *a kingdom which ſhall never be moved*, may our children's children ſay to their poſterity, with tears of grateful ſorrow in their eyes, *When the ear heard him, then it bleſſed him; when the eye ſaw him, it gave witneſs to him—becauſe he put on righteouſneſs and it clothed him, and becauſe judgment and equity were his robe and diadem!*

THESE, ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE, are the devout wiſhes of an affectionate people; and they ſhall never ceaſe to be the ardent prayer of,

SIR,

Your SERENE HIGHNESS's

moſt dutiful,

moſt obedient, and

moſt devoted Servant,

ARCHIBALD MACLAINE.

# TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I CANNOT perſuade myſelf, that the complaints we hear frequently of the frivolous nature of the public taſte in matters of literature, are ſo far to be relied on, as to make me deſpair of a favourable reception of the following work. A Hiſtory of the Chriſtian Church, compoſed with judgment, taſte, and candour, drawn, with uncommon diſcernment and induſtry, from the beſt ſources, enriched with much uſeful learning and ſeveral important diſcoveries, and connected with the Hiſtory of Arts, Philoſophy, and Civil Government, is an object that will very probably attract the attention of many, and muſt undoubtedly excite the curioſity of the judicious and the wiſe. A work of this nature will be conſidered by the *Philoſopher* as an important branch of the Hiſtory of the Human Mind, and I need not mention a multitude of reaſons that render it peculiarly intereſting to the *Chriſtian*. Beſides; there has not hitherto appeared, in Engliſh, any complete Hiſtory of the Church, that repreſents its revolutions, its diviſions, and doctrines, with impartiality and truth, expoſes the deluſions of popiſh legends, breathes a ſpirit of moderation and freedom, and, keeping perpetually in the view of the reader the true nature and deſign of

the Chriſtian religion, points out the deviations from its beautiful ſimplicity, that have been too frequent among all orders of men and in all ages of the world.

The following work has the beſt claim, of any I know, to theſe characters [*a*]; and its peculiar merit is pointed out, as far as modeſty would permit, in the enſuing Preface of its juſtly celebrated author. The reputation of this great man is very well known. His noble birth ſeemed to open to his ambition a fair path to civil promotion; but his zeal for the intereſts of religion, his inſatiable thirſt after knowledge, and more eſpecially his predominant taſte for ſacred literature, induced him to conſecrate his admirable talents to the ſervice of the church. The German univerſities loaded him with literary honours. The king of DENMARK invited him to ſettle at *Copenhagen*. The duke of BRUNSWICK called him from thence to *Helmſtadt*, where he received the marks of diſtinction due to his eminent abilities; filled, with applauſe, the academical chair

[*a*] Some time after I had undertaken this tranſlation, I was honoured with a letter from the learned biſhop of GLOUCESTER, in which he was ſo good as to teſtify his approbation of my deſign, and to ſpeak of the work I here offer to the public in an Engliſh dreſs, in the following manner: MOSHEIM's *Compendium is excellent, the method admirable; in ſhort, the only one deſerving the name of an Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. It deſerves, and needs, frequent notes.*—I hope this eminent prelate will not take amiſs my placing here a teſtimony that was not deſigned to be produced in this public manner. It is, however, ſo adapted to give thoſe who examine recommendations with diſcernment a favourable notion of the following work, that I could not think of ſuppreſſing it. It is uſual, in publiſhing certain ancient authors, to prefix to them the encomiums they have been honoured with by thoſe whoſe authority is reſpected in the republic of letters. I adopt this cuſtom ſo far as to mention one teſtimony;—more would be unneceſſary; the teſtimony of a WARBURTON is abundantly ſufficient to anſwer my purpoſe, and will be juſtly looked upon as equivalent to a multitude.

of divinity; was honoured with the character of eccleſiaſtical counſellor to that reſpectable court; and preſided over the ſeminaries of learning in the dutchy of *Wolfembuttle* and the principality of *Blackenburg*. When the late king formed the deſign of giving an uncommon degree of luſtre to the Univerſity of *Gottingen*, by filling it with men of the firſt rank in the literary world, ſuch as a HALLER, a GESNER, and a MICHAELIS, Dr. MOSHEIM was deemed worthy to appear at the head of that famous ſeat of learning, in the quality of chancellor; and here he died, univerſally lamented, in the year 1755, and in the ſixty-firſt year of his age. In depth of judgment, in extent of learning, in the powers of a noble and maſculine eloquence, in purity of taſte, and in a laborious application to all the various branches of erudition and philoſophy, he had certainly very few ſuperiors. His Latin tranſlation of the celebrated Dr. CUDWORTH's *Intellectual Syſtem of the Univerſe*, enriched with large annotations, diſcovered ſuch a profound acquaintance with ancient philoſophy and erudition, as juſtly excited the admiration of the learned world. His ingenious illuſtrations of the ſacred writings, his ſucceſsful labours in the defence of Chriſtianity, and the light he caſt upon the hiſtory of religion and philoſophy by his uninterrupted reſearches, appear in a multitude of volumes, which are deſervedly placed among the moſt valuable treaſures of ſacred and profane literature; and the learned and judicious work, that is here preſented to the public, will undoubtedly render his name illuſtrious in the records of religion and letters.

How far juſtice has been done to this excellent work, in the following tranſlation, is a point that muſt be left to the deciſion of thoſe who ſhall think proper to peruſe it with attention. I can ſay, with

the ſtricteſt truth, that I have ſpared no pains to render it worthy of their gracious acceptance; and this conſideration gives me ſome claim to their candour and indulgence, for any defects they may find in it. I have endeavoured to render my tranſlation faithful, but never propoſed to render it entirely literal. The ſtyle of the original is by no means a model to imitate, in a work deſigned for general uſe. Dr. MOSHEIM affected brevity, and laboured to crowd many things into few words; thus his diction, though pure and correct, became ſententious and harſh, without that harmony which pleaſes the ear, and thoſe tranſitions which make a narration flow with eaſe. This being the caſe, I have ſometimes taken conſiderable liberties with my author, and followed the *ſpirit* of his narrative without adhering ſtrictly to the *letter*. Where, indeed, the Latin phraſe appeared to me elegant, expreſſive, and compatible with the Engliſh idiom, I have conſtantly followed it; in all other caſes, I have departed from it, and have often added a few ſentences, to render an obſervation more ſtriking, a fact more clear, a portrait more finiſhed. Had I been tranſlating CICERO or TACITUS, I ſhould not have thought ſuch freedom pardonable. The tranſlation of a claſſic author, like the copy of a capital picture, muſt exhibit not only the *ſubject*, but alſo the *manner* of the original; this rule, however, is not applicable to the work now under conſideration.

The reader will eaſily diſtinguiſh the *additional* Notes of the Tranſlator from the *original* ones of the Author; the references to the latter being included in *crotchets*, while thoſe that indicate the former are marked with a hand, thus (☞).

When I entered upon this undertaking, I propoſed rendering the additional notes more numerous and ample, than the reader will find them. I ſoon perceived

perceived that the profecution of my original plan would render this work too voluminous; and this induced me to alter my purpoſe. The notes I have given, are not, however, inconſiderable in number; I wiſh I could ſay as much with reſpect to their merit and importance.—I would only hope, that ſome of them will be looked upon as not altogether unneceſſary.

*Hague*, Dec. 4, 1764.

# AUTHOR's PREFACE.

THE different editions of the *Elements of the Chriſtian Hiſtory* [*a*] met with ſuch a favourable reception from the public, and the demand for them was ſo great, that they were, in a little time, out of print. Upon this occaſion, the worthy perſon, at whoſe expence they had been preſented to the public, deſired earneſtly to give a new edition of the ſame work improved and enlarged, and thus ſtill more worthy of its gracious acceptance. The other occupations in which I was engaged, and a prudent conſideration of the labour I muſt undergo in the correction and augmentation of a work in which I myſelf perceived ſo many imperfections, prevented my yielding, for a long time, to his earneſt ſolicitations. The importunities of my friends at length prevailed upon me to undertake this difficult work; and I have employed aſſiduouſly my hours of leiſure, during the ſpace of two years, in bringing it up to as high a degree of perfection as I am capable of giving it. So that now theſe Elements of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory appear under a new form, and the changes they have undergone are certainly advantageous in every reſpect. I have retained ſtill the diviſion of the whole into certain periods; for though a continued narration would have been more agreeable to my own taſte, and had alſo ſeveral circumſtances to recommend it, yet the counſels of ſome learned men, who have ex-

☞ [*a*] A ſmall work publiſhed by Dr. MOSHEIM, many years ago, in two volumes, 12mo.

perienced the great advantages of this diviſion, engaged me to prefer it to every other method. And, indeed, when we examine this matter with due attention, we ſhall find, that the author, who propoſes comprehending in one work all that variety of obſervations and facts that are neceſſary to an acquaintance with the ſtate of Chriſtianity in the different ages of the church, will find it impoſſible to execute this deſign, without adopting certain general diviſions of time, and others of a more particular kind, which the variety of objects, that demand a place in his Hiſtory, naturally points out.

And as this was my deſign in the following work, I have left its primitive form entire, and made it my principal buſineſs to correct, improve, and augment it in ſuch a manner, as to render it more inſtructive and entertaining to the reader.

My principal care has been employed in eſtabliſhing upon the moſt ſolid foundations, and confirming by the moſt reſpectable authority, the credit of the facts related in this Hiſtory. For this purpoſe, I have drawn from the fountain head, and have gone to thoſe genuine ſources from whence the pure and uncorrupted ſtreams of evidence flow. I have conſulted the beſt authors of every age, and chiefly thoſe who were contemporary with the events they relate, or lived near the periods in which they happened; and I have endeavoured to report their contents with brevity, perſpicuity, and preciſion. Abbreviators, generally ſpeaking, do little more than reduce to a ſhort and narrow compaſs, thoſe large bodies of hiſtory, that have been compiled from original authors; this method may be, in ſome meaſure, juſtified by ſeveral reaſons, and therefore is not to be entirely diſapproved. From hence nevertheleſs it happens, that the errors, which almoſt always abound in large and voluminous

voluminous productions, are propagated with facility, and paſſing from one book into many, are unhappily handed down from age to age. This I had formerly obſerved in ſeveral abridgments; and I had lately the mortification to find ſome inſtances of this in my own work, when I examined it by the pure lamp of antiquity, and compared it with thoſe original records that are conſidered as the genuine ſources of ſacred hiſtory. It was then, that I perceived the danger of confiding implicitly even in thoſe who are the moſt generally eſteemed on account of their fidelity, penetration, and diligence; and it was then alſo, that I became ſenſible of the neceſſity of adding, ſuppreſſing, changing, and correcting ſeveral things in the ſmall work which I formerly publiſhed, and which has been already mentioned. In the execution of this neceſſary taſk, I can affirm with truth, that I have not been wanting in perſeverance, induſtry, or attention; and yet, with all theſe, it is extremely difficult to avoid miſtakes of every kind, as thoſe who are acquainted with the nature of hiſtorical reſearches abundantly know. How far I have approached to that inacceſſible degree of exactneſs, which is chargeable with no error, muſt be left to the deciſion of thoſe whoſe extenſive knowledge of the Chriſtian hiſtory entitles them to pronounce judgment in this matter. That ſuch may judge with the more facility, I have mentioned the authors who have been my guides; and, if I have in any reſpect miſrepreſented their accounts or their ſentiments, I muſt confeſs, that I am much more inexcuſable than ſome other hiſtorians, who have met with and deſerved the ſame reproach, ſince I have peruſed with attention and compared with each other the various authors to whoſe teſtimony I appeal, having formed a reſolution of truſting to no authority

rity inferior to that of the original ſources of hiſtorical truth.

In order to execute, with ſome degree of ſucceſs, the deſign I formed of rendering my abridgment more perfect, and of giving the hiſtory of the church as it ſtands in the moſt authentic records, and in the writings of thoſe whoſe authority is moſt reſpectable, I found myſelf obliged to make many changes and additions. Theſe will be viſible through the whole of the following work, but more eſpecially in the THIRD BOOK, which comprehends the hiſtory of the Chriſtian, and particularly of the Latin or Weſtern church, from CHARLEMAGNE to the riſe of LUTHER and the commencement of the Reformation. This period of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, though it abound with ſhining examples; though it be unſpeakably uſeful as a key to the knowledge of the political, as well as religious, ſtate of *Europe*; though it be ſingularly adapted to unfold the origin and explain the reaſons of many modern tranſactions, has nevertheleſs been hitherto treated with leſs perſpicuity, ſolidity, and elegance, than any other branch of the hiſtory of the church. The number of writers that have attempted to throw light upon this intereſting period is conſiderable, but few of them are in the hands of the public. The barbarous ſtyle of one part of them, the profound ignorance of another, and the partial and factious ſpirit of a third, are ſuch as render them by no means inviting; and the enormous bulk and exceſſive price of the productions of ſome of the beſt of theſe writers muſt neceſſarily render them ſcarce. It is further to be obſerved, that ſome of the moſt valuable records that belong to the period of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory now under conſideration, lie yet in manuſcript in the collections of the curious (or the opulent, who are willing to paſs for ſuch), and are thus concealed from public view.

Thoſe

Thoſe who conſider theſe circumſtances will no longer be ſurpriſed, that in this part of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, the moſt learned and laborious writers have omitted many things of conſequence, and treated others without ſucceſs. Among theſe, the annaliſts and other hiſtorians, ſo highly celebrated by the church of *Rome*, ſuch as BARONIUS, RAYNALDUS, BZOVIUS, MANRIQUES, and WADDING, though they were amply furniſhed with ancient manuſcripts and records, have nevertheleſs committed more faults, and fallen into errors of greater conſequence, than other writers, who were by far their inferiors in learning and credit, and had much leſs acceſs to original records than they were favoured with.

Theſe conſiderations induce me to hope, that the work I here preſent to the public will neither appear ſuperfluous nor uſeleſs. For as I have employed many years in the moſt laborious reſearches, in order to acquire a thorough acquaintance with the hiſtory of Chriſtianity from the eighth century downwards, and as I flatter myſelf that, by the aſſiſtance of books and manuſcripts too little conſulted, I have arrived at a more certain and ſatisfactory knowledge of that period than is to be found in the generality of writers, I cannot but think, that it will be doing real ſervice to Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory to produce ſome of theſe diſcoveries, as this may encourage the learned and induſtrious to purſue the plan that I have thus begun, and to complete the hiſtory of the Latin church, by diſpelling the darkneſs of what is called the *Middle Age*. And indeed I may venture to affirm, that I have brought to light ſeveral things hitherto generally unknown, corrected from records of undoubted authority accounts of other things known but imperfectly and expreſſed with much perplexity and confuſion, and

expoſed

expoſed the fabulous nature of many events that deform the annals of ſacred hiſtory. I here perhaps carry too far that ſelf-praiſe, which the candour and indulgence of the public are diſpoſed either to overlook as the infirmity, or to regard as the privilege, of old age. Thoſe, however, who are curious to know how far this ſelf-applauſe is juſt and well-grounded, have only to caſt an eye on the illuſtrations I have given on the ſubject of CONSTANTINE's *Donation*, as alſo with reſpect to the *Cathari* and *Albigenſes*, the *Beghards* and *Beguines*, the *Brethren* and *Siſters of the Free Spirit* (whoſe peſtilential fanaticiſm was a public nuiſance to many countries in *Europe* during the ſpace of four hundred years), the *Fratricelli*, or *Little Brethren*, the controverſies between the *Franciſcans* and the *Roman Pontifs*, the hiſtory of BERENGER and the *Lollards*, and other matters. When my illuſtrations on theſe ſubjects and points of hiſtory are compared with what we find concerning them in other writers, it will perhaps appear, that my pretenſions to the merit of ſome intereſting diſcoveries are not entirely without foundation.

Theſe acceſſions to Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory could not be exhibited with the ſame brevity which I have obſerved in treating other ſubjects, that have already been amply enlarged upon by others; for this would have been incompatible with the information of the curious, who would have received but imperfect and confuſed notions of theſe ſubjects, and would have made me, perhaps, paſs for a fabulous writer, who advanced novelties, without mentioning either my guides or my authorities. I have, therefore, not only explained all thoſe points of hiſtory which carry with them an appearance of novelty, or recede conſiderably from the notions commonly received, but have alſo confirmed them by a ſufficient

number

number of obſervations and teſtimonies to eſtabliſh their credibility on a ſolid foundation. The illuſtrations and enlargements, which, generally ſpeaking, carry an air of diſproportion and ſuperfluity in an hiſtorical abridgment, were abſolutely neceſſary in the preſent caſe.

Theſe reaſons engaged me to change the plan laid down in my former work, and one peculiar conſideration induced me to render the preſent hiſtory more ample and voluminous. The *Elements*, ſo often mentioned, were deſigned principally for the uſe of thoſe who are appointed to inſtruct the ſtudious youth in the hiſtory and viciſſitudes of the Chriſtian church, and who ſtand in need of a compendious text to give a certain order and method to their prelections. In this view I treated each ſubject with the utmoſt brevity, and left, as was natural and fitting, much to the learning and abilities of thoſe who ſhould think proper to make uſe of theſe *Elements* in their courſe of inſtruction. But, in reviewing this compendious work with a deſign to offer it anew to the public, I imagined it might be rendered more acceptable to many, by ſuch improvements and additions as might adapt it not only to the uſe of thoſe who teach others, but alſo of thoſe who are deſirous of acquiring, by their own application, a general knowledge of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. It was with this view that I made conſiderable additions to my former work, illuſtrated many things that had been there obſcurely expreſſed for the ſake of brevity, and reduced to a regular and perſpicuous order a variety of facts, the recital of which had been more or leſs attended with perplexity and confuſion. Hence it is, that, in the following work, the hiſtory of the calamities, in which the Chriſtians of the firſt ages were involved, and the origin and progreſs of the ſects and hereſies

which troubled the church, are exhibited with an uncommon degree of accuracy and preciſion. Hence the various forms of religion, which have ſprung from the exceſſive love of novelty, are repreſented without prejudice or partiality, and with all poſſible perſpicuity and truth. It is alſo in conſequence of this change of my original deſign, that I have taken the utmoſt pains to ſtate more clearly religious controverſies, to eſtimate their reſpective moment and importance, and to exhibit the arguments alleged on both ſides: nor muſt I omit mentioning the care and labour I have employed in giving an exact narration of the tranſactions, wars, and enterpriſing meaſures, of the Roman pontifs, from the reign of CHARLEMAGNE down to the preſent times.

Thoſe, therefore, who are prevented from applying themſelves to a regular ſtudy of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory through want of leiſure, or by not having at hand the ſources of inſtruction, and are nevertheleſs deſirous of acquiring a diſtinct knowledge of certain events, doctrines, or religious rites, may conſult the following work, in which they will find the information they want; and thoſe who are inclined to puſh their inquiries ſtill further, will ſee the courſe they muſt purſue, and the authors mentioned whom it will be proper for them to peruſe.

It would betray an unpardonable preſumption in me to imagine, that in a work, whoſe plan is ſo extenſive, and whoſe contents are ſo various, I have never fallen into any miſtakes, or let any thing drop from my pen, which ſtands in need of correction. But as I am conſcious to myſelf of having conducted this undertaking with the moſt upright intentions, and of having employed all thoſe means that are generally looked upon as the beſt

beſt preſervatives againſt the ſeduction of error, I would hope that the miſtakes I may have committed are neither ſo frequent nor ſo momentous as to be productive of any pernicious effects.

I might add more; but nothing more is neceſſary to enable thoſe to judge of this work, who judge with knowledge, impartiality and candour. I therefore conclude, by offering the juſt tribute of my gratitude to Almighty God, who, amidſt the infirmities of my advanced years and other preſſures under which I have laboured, has ſupplied me with ſtrength to bring this difficult work to a concluſion.

*Gottingen*,
March 23, 1755.

# INTRODUCTION.

I. ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY is a clear and faithful narration of the tranſactions, revolutions, and events, that relate to that large community, which bears the name of JESUS CHRIST, and is vulgarly known under the denomination of the CHURCH. It comprehends both the *external* and *internal* condition of this community, and ſo connects each event with the cauſes from which it proceeds, and the inſtruments which have been concerned in its production, that the attentive reader may be led to obſerve the diſplays of providential wiſdom and goodneſs in the preſervation of the church, and thus find his piety improved, as well as his knowledge. Definition of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.

II. The church, founded by the miniſtry and death of CHRIST, cannot be repreſented with more perſpicuity and propriety than under the notion of a ſociety ſubjected to a lawful dominion, and governed by certain laws and inſtitutions, moſtly of a moral and ſpiritual tendency. To ſuch a ſociety many external events muſt happen, which will advance or oppoſe its intereſts, and accelerate or retard its progreſs towards perfection, in conſequence of its unavoidable connexion with the courſe and revolutions of human affairs. Moreover, as nothing is ſtable and uniform where the imperfections of humanity take place, this religious ſociety, beſides the viciſſitudes to which it muſt be expoſed from the influence of external events, muſt be liable to various changes in its internal conſtitution. In this view of things then it appears, that the hiſtory of the church, like that of the ſtate, may be divided, with propriety, into two general Diviſion of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory into External and Internal.

branches, which we may call its *External* and *Internal* hiſtory.

The External, which comprehends the proſperous and calamitous events that happened to the church.

III. The *External Hiſtory* of the church comprehends all the changes, viciſſitudes, and events, that have diverſified the external ſtate and condition of this ſacred community. And as all public ſocieties have their periods of luſtre and decay, and are expoſed to revolutions both of a happy and calamitous nature, ſo this firſt branch of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory may be ſubdivided into two, comprehending reſpectively, the *proſperous* and *calamitous* events that have happened to the church.

Proſperous events.

IV. The *proſperous* events that have contributed to extend the limits, or to augment the influence, of the Chriſtian church, have proceeded either from its rulers and leaders, or from the ſubordinate members of this great community. Under the former claſs, we rank its *public* rulers, ſuch as princes, magiſtrates, and pontiffs, who, by their authority and laws, their liberality, and even their arms, have maintained its cauſe and extended its borders; as alſo its more *private* leaders, its learned and pious doctors, whoſe wiſe counſels, pious exploits, eminent examples, and diſtinguiſhed abilities have contributed moſt to promote its *true* proſperity and luſtre. Under the latter claſs, we may comprehend the advantages, which the cauſe of Chriſtianity has derived, from the active faith, the invincible conſtancy, the fervent piety, and extenſive charity of its genuine profeſſors, who, by the attractive luſtre of theſe amiable virtues, have led many into the way of truth, and engaged them to ſubmit themſelves to the empire of the MESSIAH.

Calamitous events.

V. Under the *calamitous* events that have happened to the church, may be comprehended the injuries it has received from the vices and paſſions of its friends, and the bitter oppoſition and inſi-

dious

dious ſtratagems of its enemies. The profeſſors of Chriſtianity, and more eſpecially the doctors and rulers of the church, have done unſpeakable detriment to the cauſe of religion, by their ignorance and ſloth, their luxury and ambition, their uncharitable zeal, animoſities and contentions, of which many ſhocking examples will be exhibited in the courſe of this hiſtory. Chriſtianity had *public* enemies to encounter, even princes and magiſtrates, who oppoſed its progreſs by penal laws, and blood-thirſty perſecution; it had alſo private and inveterate adverſaries in a certain ſet of philoſophers, or rather ſophiſts, who, enſlaved to ſuperſtition or abandoned to atheiſm, endeavoured to blaſt the riſing church by their perfidious accuſations and their virulent writings.

VI. Such then are the events that are exhibited to our view in the external hiſtory of the church. Its *Internal Hiſtory* comprehends the changes and viciſſitudes that have happened in its inward conſtitution, in that ſyſtem of diſcipline and doctrine by which it ſtands diſtinguiſhed from all other religious ſocieties. This branch may be properly termed the *Hiſtory of the Chriſtian Religion.* The cauſes of theſe internal changes are to be ſought for principally in the conduct and meaſures of thoſe who have preſided and borne rule in the church. It has been too frequently their practice to interpret the truths and precepts of religion in a manner accommodated to their particular ſyſtems, nay, to their private intereſt; and, while they have found in ſome implicit obedience, they have met with warm oppoſition from others. Hence have proceeded theological broils and civil commotions, in which the cauſe of religion has often been defended at the expence both of juſtice and humanity. All theſe things muſt be obſerved with the ſtricteſt attention by an eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian.

Internal Hiſtory, which comprehends,

First, the history of the Christian doctors.

VII. The first thing, therefore, that should be naturally treated in the *Internal History* of the church, is the history of its ministers, rulers, and form of government. When we look back to the commencement of the Christian church, we find its government administered jointly by the pastors and the people. But, in process of time, the scene changes, and we see these pastors affecting an air of pre-eminence and superiority, trampling upon the rights and privileges of the community, and assuming to themselves a supreme authority both in civil and religious matters. This invasion of the rights of the people was at length carried to such a height, that a single man administered, or at least pretended a right to administer, the affairs of the whole church with an unlimited sway.—Among the doctors of these early times, there were some who acquired, by their learned labours, a shining reputation and an universal influence; they were regarded as oracles; their decisions were handed down to posterity as sacred rules of faith and practice; and they thus deserve to be mentioned, with particular distinction, among the governors of the church, though no part of its public administration was actually in their hands [*a*].

Secondly, the ministry of the doctrines and laws of the church.

VIII. After giving an account of the rulers and doctors of the church, the ecclesiastical historian proceeds to exhibit a view of the *laws* that are peculiar to this sacred community, that form, as it were, its center of union, and distinguish it from all other religious societies. These *laws* are of two kinds. The first are properly called *divine*, because they are immediately enacted by God himself, and are con-

☞ [*a*] By these our author means the *Fathers*, whose writings form still a rule of faith in the Romish church; while in the Protestant churches their authority diminishes from day to day.

tained

tained in thoſe ſacred books, which carry the moſt ſtriking marks of a divine origin. They conſiſt of thoſe *doctrines* that are the objects of faith and reaſon, and thoſe *precepts* that are addreſſed to the heart and the affections. To the ſecond kind belong thoſe *laws* that are merely of human inſtitution, and derive their authority only from the injunctions of the rulers of the church.

Rules neceſſary to be obſerved in giving a hiſtory of the doctrines of the Chriſtian church.

IX. In that part of the ſacred hiſtory which relates to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, it is neceſſary, above all things, to inquire particularly into the degree of authority that has been attributed to the ſacred writings in all the different periods of the church, and alſo into the manner in which the divine doctrines they contain, have been explained and illuſtrated. For the true ſtate of religion in every age can only be learned from the point of view in which theſe celeſtial oracles were conſidered, and from the manner in which they were expounded to the people. As long as they were the only rule of faith, religion preſerved its native purity; and in proportion as their deciſions were either neglected or poſtponed to the inventions of men, it degenerated from its primitive and divine ſimplicity. It is further neceſſary to ſhew under this head, what was the fate of the pure laws and doctrines of Chriſtianity—how they were interpreted and explained—how they were defended againſt the enemies of the Goſpel—how they were corrupted and adulterated by the ignorance and licentiouſneſs of men. And, finally, it will be proper to enquire here, how far the lives and manners of Chriſtians have been conformable to the dictates of theſe ſacred laws, and the influence that theſe ſublime doctrines ought to have upon the hearts of men; as alſo to examine the rules of diſcipline preſcribed by the ſpiritual governors of the church, in order to

correct and reſtrain the vices and irregularities of its members.

Thirdly, the hiſtory of its ceremonies and worſhip.

X. The *Human Laws*, that conſtitute a part of eccleſiaſtical government, conſiſt in precepts concerning the external worſhip of the Deity, and, in certain rites, either confirmed by cuſtom or introduced by poſitive and expreſs authority. *Rites* and *ceremonies* regard religion either *directly* or *indirectly*; by the former, we underſtand thoſe that are uſed in the immediate worſhip of the Supreme Being, whether in public or in private; by the latter, ſuch pious and decent inſtitutions as, beſides direct acts of worſhip, have obtained in the church. This part of ſacred hiſtory is of a vaſt extent, both on account of the great diverſity of theſe ceremonies, and the frequent changes and modifications through which they have paſſed. This conſideration will juſtify our treating them with brevity, in a work which is only deſigned as a compendious view of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

Fourthly, the hiſtory of the hereſies that have divided it.

XI. As bodies politic are ſometimes diſtracted with wars and ſeditions, ſo has the Chriſtian church, though deſigned to be the manſion of charity and concord, been unhappily perplexed by inteſtine diviſions, occaſioned ſometimes by points of doctrine, at others by a variety of ſentiments about certain rites and ceremonies. The principal authors of theſe diviſions have been ſtigmatized with the title of *Heretics*, and their peculiar opinions, of conſequence diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of *Hereſies* [*b*]. The nature therefore and progreſs of theſe inteſtine diviſions or *hereſies* are to be carefully unfolded; and, if this be done with judgment and impartiality, it muſt prove uſeful and intereſting in the higheſt degree,

☞ [*b*] A term innocent in its primitive ſignification, though become odious by the enormity of ſome errors, to which it has been applied, and alſo by the uſe that has been made of it, to vent the malignity of enthuſiaſts and bigots.

though

though at the ſame time it muſt be obſerved, that no branch of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory is ſo painful and difficult, on account of the ſagacity, candour, and application that it requires, in order to its being treated in a ſatisfactory manner. The difficulty of arriving at the truth, in reſearches of this nature, is extreme, on account of the injurious treatment that has been ſhewn to the heads of religious ſects, and the unfair repreſentations that have been given of their tenets and opinions; and this difficulty has been conſiderably augmented by this particular circumſtance, that the greateſt part of the writings of thoſe who were branded with the name of heretics have not reached our times. It is therefore the duty of a candid hiſtorian to avoid attaching to this term the invidious ſenſe in which it is too often uſed, ſince it is the invective of all contending parties, and is employed againſt truth as frequently as againſt error. The wiſeſt method here is to take the word *Heretic* in its general ſignification, as denoting a perſon, who, either directly or indirectly, has been the occaſion of exciting diviſions and diſſenſions among Chriſtians.

In treating Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, even ſacts are to be conſidered in connexion with their cauſes.

XII. After thus conſidering what conſtitutes the *matter* of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, it will be proper to beſtow a few thoughts on the *manner* of treating it, as this is a point of too much importance not to deſerve a moment's attention. And here we may obſerve, that in order to render both the External and Internal Hiſtory of the Church truly intereſting and uſeful, it is abſolutely neceſſary to trace effects to their cauſes, and to connect events with the circumſtances, views, principles, and inſtruments that have contributed to their exiſtence. A bare recital of facts can at beſt but enrich the *memory*, and furniſh a certain degree of amuſement; but the hiſtorian, who enters into the ſecret ſprings that

direct the courſe of outward events, and views things in their various relations, connexions, and tendencies, gives thus a proper exerciſe to the *judgment* of the reader, and adminiſters, on many occaſions, the moſt uſeful leſſons of wiſdom and prudence. It is true, a high degree of caution is to be obſerved here, leſt, in diſcloſing the ſecret ſprings of public events, we ſubſtitute imaginary cauſes in the place of real, and attribute the actions of men to principles they never profeſſed.

General method of inveſtigating the ſecret cauſes of things.

XIII. In order to diſcover the ſecret cauſes of public events, ſome general ſuccours are to be derived from the *Hiſtory of the times* in which they happened, and the *Teſtimonies of the authors* by whom they are recorded. But beſides theſe, a conſiderable *acquaintance with human nature*, founded on long obſervation and experience, is ſingularly uſeful in reſearches of this kind. The hiſtorian, who has acquired a competent knowledge of the views that occupy the generality of men, who has ſtudied a great variety of characters, and attentively obſerved the force and violence of human paſſions, together with the infirmities and contradictions they produce in the conduct of life, will find, in this knowledge, a key to the ſecret reaſons and motives which gave riſe to many of the moſt important events of ancient times. A knowledge alſo of the *manners* and *opinions* of the perſons concerned in the events that are related, will contribute much to lead us to the true origin of things.

More particular rules for coming to this knowledge in the External hiſtory of the church;

XIV. There are, however, beſides theſe general views, particular conſiderations, which will aſſiſt us ſtill further in tracing up to their true cauſes the various events of ſacred hiſtory. We muſt, for example, in the External hiſtory of the church, attend carefully to two things; *firſt*, to the political ſtate of thoſe kingdoms and nations in which the Chriſtian religion has been embraced

braced or rejected; and, *ſecondly*, to their religious ſtate, *i. e.* the opinions they have entertained concerning the divine nature, and the worſhip that is to be addreſſed to him. For we ſhall then perceive, with more certainty and leſs difficulty, the reaſons of the different reception Chriſtianity has met with in different nations, when we are acquainted with the reſpective forms of civil government, the political maxims, and the public forms of religion that prevailed in thoſe countries and in thoſe periods of time in which the Goſpel received encouragement, or met with oppoſition.

and in its Internal Hiſtory.

XV. With reſpect to the *Internal Hiſtory of the Church*, nothing is more adapted to lay open to view the hidden ſprings of its various changes, than an acquaintance with the *Hiſtory of learning and philoſophy* in the times of old. For it is certain, that human learning and philoſophy have, in all times, pretended to modify the doctrines of Chriſtianity; and that theſe pretenſions have extended further than belongs to the province of philoſophy on the one hand, or is conſiſtent with the purity and ſimplicity of the Goſpel on the other. It may alſo be obſerved, that a knowledge of the forms of civil government, and of the ſuperſtitious rites and inſtitutions of ancient times, is not only uſeful, as we remarked above, to illuſtrate ſeveral things in the *External* Hiſtory of the church, but alſo to render a ſatisfactory account of its *Internal* variations both in point of doctrine and worſhip. For the genius of human laws and the maxims of civil rulers have undoubtedly had a great influence in forming the conſtitution of the church; and even its ſpiritual leaders have, in too many inſtances, from an ill-judged prudence, modelled its diſcipline and worſhip after the ancient ſuperſtitions.

XVI.

The sources from whence Ecclesiastical History must be derived.

XVI. We cannot be at any loss to know the sources from whence this important knowledge is to be derived. The best writers of every age, who make mention of ecclesiastical affairs, and particularly those who were contemporary with the events they relate, are to be carefully consulted; since it is from credible testimonies and respectable authorities that history derives a solid and permanent foundation. Our esteem for those writers, who may be considered as the sources of historical knowledge, ought not however to lead us to treat with neglect the historians and annalists, who have already made use of these original records; since it betrays a foolish sort of vanity to reject the advantages that may be derived from the succours and labours of those who have preceded us in their endeavours to cast light upon matters that have been for many ages covered with obscurity [c].

The essential qualities of an Ecclesiastical History.

XVII. From all this we shall easily discern the qualifications that are essential to a good writer of Ecclesiastical History. His knowledge of human affairs must be considerable, and his learning extensive. He must be endowed with a spirit of observation and sagacity; a habit of reasoning with evidence and facility; a faithful memory; and a judgment matured by experience, and strengthened by exercise. Such are the intellectual endowments that are required in the character of a good historian; and the moral qualities that are necessary to complete it, are, a persevering and inflexible attachment to truth and virtue, a freedom from the servitude of prejudice and passion, and a laborious and patient turn of mind.

[c] The various writers of ecclesiastical history are enumerated by SEVER. WALT. SLUTERUS in his *Propylæum Historiæ Christianæ*, published at *Lunenburg* in 4to. in the year 1696; and by CASP. SAGITTARIUS, in his *Introductio ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam, singulasque ejus partes.*

XVIII. Thoſe who undertake to write the hiſtory of the Chriſtian church are expoſed to receive a bias from three different ſources, from *times*, *perſons*, and *opinions*. The *times*, in which we live, have often ſo great an influence on our manner of judging, as to make us conſider the events, which happen in our days, as a rule by which we are to eſtimate the probability or evidence of thoſe that are recorded in the hiſtory of paſt ages. The *perſons*, on whoſe teſtimonies we think we have reaſon to depend, acquire an imperceptible authority over our ſentiments, that too frequently ſeduces us to adopt their errors, eſpecially if theſe perſons have been diſtinguiſhed by eminent degrees of ſanctity and virtue. And an attachment to favourite *opinions* leads authors ſometimes to pervert, or, at leaſt, to modify, facts in favour of thoſe who have embraced theſe opinions, or to the diſadvantage of ſuch as have oppoſed them. Theſe kinds of ſeduction are ſo much the more dangerous, as thoſe whom they deceive are, in innumerable caſes, inſenſible of their deluſion, and of the falſe repreſentations of things to which it leads them. It is not neceſſary to obſerve the ſolemn obligations that bind an hiſtorian to guard againſt theſe three ſources of error with the moſt delicate circumſpection, and the moſt ſcrupulous attention.

*An hiſtorian muſt be free from a ſervile attachment to times, men, and opinions.*

XIX. It is well known nevertheleſs how far eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, in all ages, have departed from theſe rules, and from others of equal evidence and importance. For, not to mention thoſe who lay claim to a high rank among the writers of hiſtory in conſequence of a happy memory, loaded with an ample heap of materials, nor thoſe whoſe pens are rather guided by ſordid views of intereſt than by a generous love of truth, it is but too evident, how few in number the unprejudiced and impartial hiſtorians are, whom neither the influence

*The defects that are viſible in the writers of Church hiſtory.*

fluence of the ſect to which they belong, nor the venerable and impoſing names of antiquity, nor the ſpirit of the times and the torrent of prevailing *opinion*, can turn aſide from the obſtinate purſuit of truth *alone*. In the preſent age, more eſpecially, the ſpirit of the times and the influence of predominant opinions, have gained with many an incredible aſcendant. Hence we find frequently in the writings even of learned men ſuch wretched arguments as theſe: *Such an opinion is true; therefore it muſt of neceſſity have been adopted by the primitive Chriſtians—Chriſt has commanded us to live in ſuch a manner; therefore it is undoubtedly certain, that the Chriſtians of ancient times lived ſo.—A certain cuſtom does not take place now; therefore it did not prevail in former times.*

The advantages that reſult from the ſtudy of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. General,

XX. If thoſe who apply themſelves to the compoſition of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory be careful to avoid the ſources of error mentioned above, their labours will be eminently uſeful to mankind, and more eſpecially to thoſe who are called to the important office of inſtructing others in the ſacred truths and duties of Chriſtianity. The hiſtory of the church preſents to our view a variety of objects that are every way adapted to confirm our faith. When we contemplate here the diſcouraging obſtacles, the united efforts of kingdoms and empires, and the dreadful calamities which Chriſtianity, in its very infancy, was obliged to encounter, and over which it gained an immortal victory, this will be ſufficient to fortify its true and zealous profeſſors againſt all the threats, cavils, and ſtratagems of profane and impious men. The great and ſhining examples alſo, which diſplay their luſtre, more or leſs, in every period of the Chriſtian hiſtory, muſt have an admirable tendency to inflame our piety, and to excite, even in the coldeſt and moſt inſenſible hearts, the love of God and virtue. Thoſe amazing revolutions

and events that diſtinguiſhed every age of the church, and often ſeemed to ariſe from ſmall beginnings and cauſes of little conſequence, proclaim, with a ſolemn and reſpectable voice, the empire of Providence, and alſo the inconſtancy and vanity of human things. And, among the many advantages that ariſe from the ſtudy of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, it is none of the leaſt, that we ſhall ſee therein the origin and occaſions of thoſe ridiculous rites, abſurd opinions, fooliſh ſuperſtitions, and pernicious errors, with which Chriſtianity is yet disfigured in too many parts of the world. This knowledge will naturally lead us to a view of the truth in its beautiful ſimplicity, will engage us to love it, and render us zealous in its defence; not to mention the pleaſure and ſatisfaction that we muſt feel in reſearches and diſcoveries of ſuch an intereſting kind.

XXI. They, more eſpecially, who are appointed to inſtruct the youth in the public univerſities, as alſo ſuch as are ſet apart for the ſervice of the church, will derive from this ſtudy the moſt uſeful leſſons of wiſdom and prudence, to direct them in the diſcharge of their reſpective offices. On the one hand, the inconſiderate zeal and temerity of others, and the pernicious conſequences with which they have been attended, will teach circumſpection; and in the miſtakes into which even men of eminent merit and abilities have fallen, they will often ſee the things they are obliged to avoid, and the ſacrifices it will be prudent to make, in order to maintain peace and concord in the church; on the other, illuſtrious examples and ſalutary meaſures will hold forth to them a rule of conduct, a lamp to ſhew them the paths they muſt purſue. It may be further obſerved, that, if we except the arms which ſcripture and reaſon furniſh againſt ſuperſtition and error, there is nothing that will enable us to combat

and particular.

bat them with more efficacy than the view of their deplorable effects, as they are repreſented to us in the hiſtory of the church. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the advantages that reſult from the ſtudy of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; experience alone can diſplay theſe in all their extent; nor ſhall we mention the benefits that may be derived from it by thoſe who have turned their views to other ſciences than that of theology, and its more peculiar utility to ſuch as are engaged in the ſtudy of the civil law. All this would lead us too far from our preſent deſign.

The method of treating Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, in its External and Internal branches.

XXII. As the hiſtory of the church is *External* or *Internal*, ſo the manner of treating it muſt be ſuited to that diviſion. As to the firſt, when the narration is long, and the thread of the hiſtory runs through a great number of ages, it is proper to divide it into certain periods, which will give the reader time to breathe, aſſiſt memory, and alſo introduce a certain method and order into the work. In the following hiſtory the uſual diviſion into centuries is adopted preferably to all others, becauſe moſt generally liked; though it be attended with difficulties and inconveniences.

XXIII. A conſiderable part of theſe inconveniences will be however removed, if, beſides this ſmaller diviſion into centuries, we adopt a larger one, and divide the ſpace of time that elapſed between the birth of CHRIST and our days into certain grand periods, that are diſtinguiſhed by ſignal revolutions or remarkable events. It is on this account that we have judged it expedient to comprehend the following Hiſtory in FOUR BOOKS, that will take in four remarkable periods: the FIRST will be employed in exhibiting the ſtate and viciſſitudes of the Chriſtian church, from its commencement to the time of CONSTANTINE the Great. The SECOND will comprehend the period, that extends from the reign of CONSTANTINE

STANTINE to that of CHARLEMAGNE, which produced ſuch a remarkable change in the face of *Europe*. The THIRD will contain the Hiſtory of the Church, from the time of CHARLEMAGNE to the memorable period when LUTHER aroſe in *Germany*, to oppoſe the tyranny of *Rome*, and to deliver divine truth from the darkneſs that covered it. And the FOURTH will carry down the ſame hiſtory, from the riſe of LUTHER to the preſent times.

XXIV. We have ſeen above, that the ſphere of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory is extenſive, that it comprehends a great variety of objects, and embraces political as well as religious matters, ſo far as the former are related to the latter, either as cauſes or effects. But, however great the diverſity of theſe objects may be, they are cloſely connected; and it is the particular buſineſs of an eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian to obſerve a method that will ſhew this connexion in the moſt conſpicuous point of view, and form into one regular *whole* a variety of parts that ſeem heterogeneous and diſcordant. Different writers have followed here different methods, according to the diverſity of their views and their peculiar manner of thinking. The order I have obſerved will be ſeen above in that part of this *Introduction*, which treats of the ſubject-matter of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; the mention of it is therefore omitted here, to avoid unneceſſary repetitions.

AN

# ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

## BOOK THE FIRST.

CONTAINING THE

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH,

FROM

## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

TO

## CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

# AN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

## BOOK I.

Containing the HISTORY of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH from its first rise to the time of CONSTANTINE the GREAT.

### PART I.

Comprehending the External HISTORY of the CHURCH.

#### CHAPTER I.

*Concerning the civil and religious state of the world at the birth of* CHRIST.

CENT. I. PART I.

The state of the Roman empire.

1. A GREAT part of the world was become subject to the Roman empire, when JESUS CHRIST made his appearance upon earth. The remoter nations, which had submitted to the yoke of this mighty empire, were ruled, either by Roman governors invested with temporary commissions, or by their own princes and laws, in subordination to the republic, whose sovereignty was to be acknowledged, and from which the conquered kings that were continued in their dominions, derived their borrowed majesty. At the same time the Roman people and their venerable senate, though they had not lost all shadow of liberty, were yet, in reality,

CENT. I. PART I.

reduced to a ſtate of ſervile ſubmiſſion to AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, who, by artifice, perfidy, and bloodſhed, had proceeded to an enormous degree of power, and united in his own perſon the pompous titles of Emperor, Sovereign, Pontiff, Cenſor, Tribune of the people, Proconſul; in a word, all the great offices of the ſtate [*a*].

*The inconveniences, which proceeded from the corrupt adminiſtration of its magiſtrates.*

II. The Roman government, conſidered both with reſpect to its form, and its laws, was certainly mild and equitable [*b*]. But the injuſtice and avarice of the Prætors and Proconſuls, and the ambitious luſt of conqueſt and dominion, which was the predominant paſſion of the Roman people, together with the rapacious proceedings of the Publicans, by whom the taxes of the empire were levied, were the occaſions of perpetual tumults and unſupportable grievances. And among the many evils that aroſe from thence we juſtly reckon the formidable armies, that were neceſſary to ſupport theſe extortions in the provinces, and the civil wars which frequently broke out between the oppreſſed nations and their haughty conquerors.

*The advantages which aroſe from its extent.*

III. It muſt, at the ſame time, be acknowledged, that this ſupreme dominion of one people, or rather of one man, over ſo many kingdoms, was attended with many conſiderable advantages to mankind in general, and to the propagation and advancement of Chriſtianity in particular. For, by the means of this almoſt univerſal empire, many nations, different in their

[*a*] See for this purpoſe the learned work of AUGUSTIN CAMPIANUS, entitled, *De officio et poteſtate Magiſtratuum Romanorum et juriſdictione*, lib. i. cap. i. p. 3, 4, &c. *Genevæ*, 1725, in Quarto.

[*b*] See MOYLE's *Eſſay on the Conſtitution of the Roman Government*, in the poſthumous works of that author, vol. i. p. 1—48. as alſo SCIP. MAFFEI *Verona illuſtrata*, lib. ii. p. 65.

language

language and in their manners, were united more intimately together in ſocial intercourſe. Hence a paſſage was opened to the remoteſt countries, by the communications which the Romans formed between the conquered provinces [*c*]. Hence alſo the nations, whoſe manners were ſavage and barbarous, were civilized by the laws and commerce of the Romans. And by this, in ſhort, the benign influence of letters and philoſophy was ſpread abroad in countries which had lain, before, under the darkeſt ignorance. All this contributed, no doubt, in a ſingular manner, to facilitate the progreſs of the Goſpel, and to crown the labours of its firſt miniſters and heralds with ſucceſs [*d*].

The Roman empire enjoys peace.

IV. The Roman empire, at the birth of CHRIST, was leſs agitated by wars and tumults, than it had been for many years before. For, though I cannot aſſent to the opinion of thoſe, who, following the account of OROSIUS, maintain, that the temple of Janus was then ſhut, and that wars and diſcords abſolutely ceaſed throughout the world [*e*]; yet it is certain, that the period, in which our Saviour deſcended upon earth, may be juſtly ſtyled the *Pacific Age*, if we compare it with the preceding times. And indeed, the tranquillity, that then reigned, was neceſſary to enable the miniſters of CHRIST to execute, with ſucceſs, their ſublime commiſſion to the human race.

[*c*] See, for a further illuſtration of this matter, *Hiſtoire des grands chemins de l'Empire Romain*, par NICOL. BERGIER, printed in the year 1728. See alſo the very learned EVERARD OTTO, *De tutela viarum publicarum*, part II. p. 314.

[*d*] ORIGEN, among others, makes particular mention of this, in the ſecond book of his anſwer to CELSUS, p. 79. of the *Cambridge* edition.

[*e*] See Jo. MASSONI *Templum Jani, Chriſto naſcente, reſeratum*. Roterodami, 1706.

CENT. I. PART I.

The ſtate of the other nations.

V. The want of ancient records renders it impoſſible to ſay any thing ſatisfactory or certain concerning the ſtate of thoſe nations, who did not receive the Roman yoke: nor indeed is their hiſtory eſſential to our preſent purpoſe. It is ſufficient to obſerve, with reſpect to them, that thoſe who inhabited the eaſtern regions were ſtrangers to the ſweets of liberty, and groaned under the burthen of an oppreſſive yoke. This, their ſoftneſs and effeminacy, both in point of manners and bodily conſtitution, contributed to make them ſupport with an unmanly patience; and even the religion they profeſſed rivetted their chains. On the contrary, the northern nations enjoyed, in their frozen dwellings, the bleſſings of ſacred freedom, which their government, their religion, a robuſt and vigorous frame of body and ſpirit, derived from the inclemency and ſeverity of their climate, all united to preſerve and maintain [*f*].

All ſunk in ſuperſtition;

VI. All theſe nations lived in the practice of the moſt abominable ſuperſtitions. For though the notion of one Supreme Being was not entirely effaced in the human mind, but ſhewed itſelf frequently, even through the darkneſs of the groſſeſt idolatry; yet all nations, except that of the Jews, acknowledged a number of governing powers whom they called Gods, and one or more of which they ſuppoſed to preſide over each particular province or people. They worſhipped theſe fictitious deities with various rites; they conſidered them as widely different from each other in ſex, and power, in their nature, and alſo in

[*f*] *Fere itaque imperia* (ſays SENECA) *penes eos fuere populos, qui mitiore cælo utuntur:* in frigora, *ſeptentrionemque vergentibus immanſueta ingenia ſunt, ut ait poeta,* ſuoque ſimillima cœlo. SENECA *De ira,* lib. ii. cap. xvi. tom. i. *Opp. Edit. Gronovii.*

their respective offices, and they appeased them by a multiplicity of ceremonies and offerings, in order to obtain their protection and favour. So that, however different the degrees of enormity might be, with which this absurd and impious theology appeared in different countries; yet there was no nation, whose sacred rites and whose religious worship did not discover a manifest abuse of reason, and very striking marks of extravagance and folly. CENT. I. PART I.

VII. Every nation then had its respective gods, over which presided one more excellent than the rest; yet in such a manner, that this supreme deity was himself controlled by the rigid empire of the fates, or what the philosophers called *Eternal necessity*. The gods of the east were different from those of the Gauls, the Germans, and the other northern nations. The Grecian divinities differed widely from those of the Egyptians, who deified plants, animals, and a great variety of the productions both of nature and art [*g*]. Each people also had their own particular manner of worshipping and appeasing their respective deities, entirely different from the sacred rites of other countries. In process of time, however, the Greeks and Romans grew as ambitious in their religious pretensions, as in their political claims. They maintained that *their* gods, though under different names, were the objects of religious worship in all nations, and therefore they gave the names of their deities to those of other countries [*b*]. This pretension, whether supported by

but not of the same kind.

[*g*] See the discourse of ATHANASIUS, entitled *Oratio contra Gentes*, in the first volume of his works.

☞ [*b*] This fact renders a satisfactory account of the vast number of gods who bore the name of Jupiter, and the multitudes that passed under those of Mercury, Venus, Hercules, Juno, &c. The Greeks, when they found, in other countries, deities that resembled their own, persuaded the wor-

CENT. I. PART I.

by ignorance or other means, introduced inexpreſſible darkneſs and perplexity into the hiſtory of the antient ſuperſtitions, and has been alſo the occaſion of innumerable errors in the writings of the learned.

No wars nor diſſentions occaſioned by this variety of religions.

VIII. One thing, indeed, which, at firſt ſight, appears very remarkable, is, that this variety of religions and of gods neither produced wars nor diſſentions among the different nations, the Egyptians excepted [*i*]. Nor is it, perhaps, neceſſary to except even them, ſince their wars undertaken for their gods cannot be looked upon, with propriety, as wholly of a religious nature [*k*]. Each nation

ſhippers of theſe foreign gods, that their deities were the ſame that were honoured in Greece, and were, indeed, convinced themſelves that this was the caſe. In conſequence of this, the Greeks gave the names of their gods to thoſe of other nations, and the Romans, in this, followed their example. Hence we find the names of Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus, &c. frequently mentioned in the more recent monuments and inſcriptions which have been found among the Gauls and Germans, though the antient inhabitants of thoſe countries worſhipped no gods under ſuch denominations. I cannot think that this method of the Greeks and Romans has introduced ſo much confuſion into mythology as Dr. MOSHEIM here imagines. If indeed there was no reſemblance between the Greek and Roman deities, and thoſe of other nations, and if the names of the deities of the former had been given to thoſe of the latter in an arbitrary and undiſtinguiſhing manner, the reflexion of our hiſtorian would be undeniably true. But it has been alleged by many learned men, and that with a high degree of probability, that the principal deities of all nations reſembled each other extremely in their eſſential characters; and, if ſo, their receiving the ſame names could not introduce much confuſion into mythology, ſince they were probably derived from one common ſource. If the Thor of the antient Celts was the ſame in dignity, character, and attributes, with the Jupiter of the Greeks and Romans, where was the impropriety of giving the ſame name?

[*i*] There are ingenious things to be found upon this head in the *Expoſitio Menſæ Iſiacæ* of PIGNORIUS, p. 41.

☞ [*k*] The religious wars of the Egyptians were not undertaken to compel others to adopt their worſhip, but to avenge the ſlaughter that was made of their gods, *viz.* Crocodiles,

nation ſuffered its neighbours to follow their own method of worſhip, to adore their own gods, to enjoy their own rites and ceremonies, and diſcovered no ſort of diſpleaſure at their diverſity of ſentiments in religious matters. There is, however, little wonderful in this ſpirit of mutual toleration, when we conſider, that they all looked upon the world as one great empire, divided into various provinces, over every one of which a certain order of divinities preſided; and that, therefore, none could behold with contempt the gods of other nations, or force ſtrangers to pay homage to theirs. The Romans exerciſed this toleration in the ampleſt manner. For, though they would not allow any changes to be made in the religions that were publicly profeſſed in the empire, nor any new form of worſhip to be openly introduced; yet they granted to their citizens a full liberty of obſerving, in private, the ſacred rites of other nations, and of honouring foreign deities (whoſe worſhip contained nothing inconſiſtent with the intereſts and laws of the republic) with feaſts, temples, conſecrated groves, and ſuch like teſtimonies of homage and reſpect [*l*].

Moſt of their gods were departed heroes.

IX. The deities of almoſt all nations were either antient heroes, renowned for noble exploits and worthy deeds, or kings and generals who had founded empires, or women become illuſtrious by remarkable actions or uſeful inventions. The merit of theſe diſtinguiſhed and eminent perſons, contemplated by their poſterity with an enthu-

codiles, *&c.* by the neighbouring nations. They were not offended at their neighbours for ſerving other divinities, but could not bear that they ſhould put theirs to death.

[*l*] See concerning this intereſtiug ſubject a very curious and learned treatiſe of the famous BYNCKERSHOECK, entitled, *Diſſertatio de cultu peregrinæ religionis apud Romanos.* This diſſertation is to be found in the *Opuſcula* of that excellent author, which were publiſhed at *Leyden* in Quarto, in the year 1719.

ſiaſtic

CENT. I. PART I.

ſiaſtic gratitude, was the reaſon of their being exalted to celeſtial honours. The natural world furniſhed another kind of deities, that were added to theſe by ſome nations. And as the ſun, moon, and ſtars ſhine forth with a luſtre ſuperior to that of all other material beings; ſo it is certain that they particularly attracted the attention of mankind, and received religious homage from almoſt all the nations of the world [*m*]. From theſe beings of a nobler kind, idolatry deſcended into an enormous multiplication of inferior powers; ſo that in many countries, mountains, trees, and rivers, the earth, the ſea, and the winds, nay, even virtues, vices, and diſeaſes, had their ſhrines attended by devout and zealous worſhippers [*n*].

The worſhip paid to theſe deities.

X. Theſe deities were honoured with rites and ſacrifices of various kinds, according to their reſpective nature and offices [*o*]. The rites uſed in

☞ [*m*] The ingenious editor of the RUINS of BALBEC has given us, in the preface to that noble work, a very curious account of the origin of the religious worſhip that was offered to the heavenly bodies by the Syrians and Arabians. In thoſe uncomfortable deſarts, where the *day* preſents nothing to the view, but the uniform, tedious, and melancholy proſpect of barren ſands, the *night* diſcloſes a moſt delightful and magnificent ſpectacle, and appears arrayed with charms of the moſt attractive kind. For the moſt part unclouded and ſerene, it exhibits to the wondering eye the *Hoſt of heaven*, in all their amazing variety and glory. In the view of this ſtupendous ſcene, the tranſition from admiration to idolatry was too eaſy to uninſtructed minds; and a people, whoſe climate offered no beauties to contemplate but thoſe of the firmament, would naturally look thither for the objects of their worſhip. The form of idolatry, in Greece, was different from that of the Syrians; and Mr. WOOD ingeniouſly attributes this to that ſmiling and variegated ſcene of mountains, vallies, rivers, groves, woods, and fountains, which the tranſported imagination, in the midſt of its pleaſing aſtoniſhment, ſuppoſed to be the ſeats of inviſible deities. See a further account of this matter in the elegant work above mentioned.

[*n*] See the learned work of J. G. VOSSIUS, *De idololatria*.

[*o*] See J. SAUBERTUS, *De ſacrificiis veterum*. Lug. Bat. 1699.

their

their worſhip were abſurd and ridiculous, and frequently cruel and obſcene. Moſt nations offered animals, and ſome proceeded to the enormity of human ſacrifices. As to their prayers, they were void of piety and ſenſe, both with reſpect to their matter and their form [*p*]. Pontiffs, prieſts, and miniſters, diſtributed into ſeveral claſſes, preſided in this ſtrange worſhip, and were appointed to prevent diſorder in the performance of the ſacred rites. This *order*, which was ſuppoſed to be diſtinguiſhed by an immediate intercourſe and friendſhip with the gods, abuſed their authority in the baſeſt manner, to deceive an ignorant and wretched people.

CENT. I. PART I.

XI. The religious worſhip we have now been conſidering, was confined to ſtated *times* and *places*. The ſtatues and other repreſentations of the gods were placed in the temples [*q*], and ſuppoſed to be animated in an incomprehenſible manner. For the votaries of theſe fictitious deities, however deſtitute they might be of reaſon in other reſpects, avoided carefully the imputation of worſhipping inanimate beings, ſuch as braſs, wood, and ſtone, and therefore pretended that the divinity, repreſented by the ſtatue, was really preſent in it, if the dedication was duly and properly made [*r*].

Confined to ſtated times and places.

XII. But, beſide the public worſhip of the gods, to which all without exception were admitted, there were certain religious inſtitutions and

Myſteries.

[*p*] See M. BROUERIUS *a* NIEDECK, *De adorationibus veterum populorum*, printed at *Utrecht*, in 8vo, in the year 1711.

☞ [*q*] Some nations were without temples, ſuch as the Perſians, Gauls, Germans, and Bretons, who performed their religious worſhip in the open air, or in the ſhady retreats of conſecrated groves.

[*r*] See ARNOBIUS *adv. Gentes*, lib. vi. p. 254. according to the edition of Heraldus. See alſo AUGUSTIN *De civitate Dei*, lib. vii. cap. xxxiii; and the *Miſopogon of the emperor* JULIAN, p. 361, according to the edition of Spanheim.

rites

CENT. I. PART I.

rites celebrated in ſecret by the Greeks and ſeveral eaſtern nations, to which a very ſmall number were allowed acceſs. Theſe were commonly called *myſteries*; and the perſons who deſired to be initiated therein, were obliged previouſly to exhibit ſatisfactory proofs of their fidelity and patience, by paſſing through various trials and ceremonies of the moſt diſagreeable kind. The ſecret of theſe inſtitutions was kept in the ſtricteſt manner, as the initiated could not reveal any thing that paſſed in them without expoſing their lives to the moſt imminent danger [*s*]; and that is the reaſon why, at this time, we are ſo little acquainted with the true nature and the real deſign of theſe hidden rites. It is, however, well known, that, in ſome of thoſe *myſteries*, many things were tranſacted that were contrary both to real modeſty and outward decency. And, indeed, from the whole of the Pagan rites, the intelligent few might eaſily learn, that the divinities generally worſhipped, were rather men famous for their vices, than diſtinguiſhed by virtuous and worthy deeds [*t*].

No tendency in Paganiſm to promote virtue.

XIII. It is, at leaſt, certain, that this religion had not the leaſt influence towards the exciting or nouriſhing ſolid and true virtue in the minds of men. For the gods and goddeſſes, to whom public homage was paid, exhibited to their worſhippers rather examples of egregious crimes, than of uſeful and illuſtrious virtues [*u*]. The gods,

[*s*] See CLARKSON on the *Liturgies*, § iv. p. 36. as alſo MEURSIUS, *De myſteriis Eleuſiniis*.

[*t*] See CICERO *Diſput. Tuſculan.* lib. ii. cap. xiii.

[*u*] There is a very remarkable paſſage to this purpoſe in the *Triſtia* of OVID, book the ſecond, beginning at line 287.

" Quis locus eſt templis auguſtior? hæc quoque vitet,
" In culpam ſi quæ eſt ingenioſa ſuam.
" Cum ſteterit Jovis æde: Jovis ſuccurret in æde,
" Quam multas matres fecerit ille Deus.

" Proxima

gods, moreover, were eſteemed ſuperior to men in power and immortality; but, in every thing elſe, they were conſidered as their equals. The prieſts were little ſolicitous to animate the people to a virtuous conduct, either by their precepts or their example; nay, they plainly enough declared, that all that was eſſential to the true worſhip of the gods, was contained only in the rites and inſtitutions which the people had received by tradition from their anceſtors [*w*]. And as to what regarded the rewards of virtue and the puniſhment of vice after this preſent life, the general notions were partly uncertain, partly licentious, and often more proper to adminiſter indulgence to vice, than encouragement to virtue. Hence, the wiſer part of mankind, about the time of CHRIST's birth, looked upon this whole ſyſtem of religion as a juſt object of ridicule and contempt.

XIV. The conſequences of this wretched theology were a univerſal corruption of manners, which diſcovered itſelf in the impunity of the moſt flagitious crimes [*x*]. JUVENAL and PERSIUS among the Latins, and LUCIAN among the Greeks, bear teſtimony to the juſtice of this heavy accuſation. It is alſo well known, that no public law prohibited the ſports of the gladiators, the exerciſe of unnatural luſts, the licentiouſneſs

On the contrary, it promoted corruption of manners.

" Proxima adoranti Junonia templa ſubibit,
" Pellicibus multis hanc doluiſſe Deam.
" Pallade conſpecta, natum de crimine virgo
" Suſtulerit quare, quæret Erichthonium."

[*w*] See BARBEYRAC's Preface to his French tranſlation of PUFFENDORF's *Syſtem of the Law of Nature and Nations*, § vi. p. 21. of the laſt edition.

[*x*] The corrupt manners of thoſe who lay in the darkneſs of idolatry are deſcribed, in an ample and affecting manner, in the firſt of CYPRIAN's epiſtles. See alſo on this ſubject CORNEL. ADAMI *Exercitatio de malis Romanorum ante prædicationem Evangelii moribus*. This is the fifth diſcourſe of a collection publiſhed by that learned writer at *Groningen*, 1712, in Quarto.

of

CENT. I. PART I.

of divorce, the cuſtom of expoſing infants, and of procuring abortions, nor the frontleſs atrocity of conſecrating publicly ſtews and brothels to certain divinities [*y*].

The arguments of the prieſts in defence of Paganiſm.

XV. Such as were not ſunk in an unaccountable and brutiſh ſtupidity, perceived the deformity of theſe religious ſyſtems. To theſe the crafty prieſts addreſſed two conſiderations, to prevent their incredulity and to diſpel their doubts. The firſt was drawn from the miracles and prodigies which, they pretended, were daily wrought in the temples, before the ſtatues of the gods and heroes that were placed there; and the ſecond was deduced from oracles and divination, by which they maintained that the ſecrets of futurity were unfolded through the interpoſition of the gods. In both theſe points the cunning of the prieſts impoſed miſerably upon the ignorance of the people; and if the diſcerning few ſaw the cheat, they were obliged, from a regard to their own ſafety, to laugh with caution, ſince the prieſts were even ready to accuſe, before a raging and ſuperſtitious multitude, thoſe who diſcovered their religious frauds, as rebels againſt the majeſty of the immortal gods.

The religion of the Greeks and Romans.

XVI. At the time of CHRIST's appearance upon earth, the religion of the Romans, as well as their arms, had extended itſelf through a great part of the world. This religion muſt be known to thoſe who are acquainted with the Grecian ſuperſtitions [*z*]. In ſome things, indeed, it differs from them; for the Romans, beſides the inſtitutions which NUMA and others had invented with

[*y*] See Dr. JOHN LELAND's excellent account of the religious ſentiments, moral conduct, and future proſpects of the Pagans, in his large work entitled, *The Advantage and Neceſſity of the Chriſtian Revelation.*

[*z*] See DIONYSIUS HALICARN. *Antiq. Rom.* lib. vii. cap. lxxii. p. 460. tom. i. Edit. Hudſon.

political

political views, added several Italic and Hetrurian fictions to the Grecian fables, and gave also to the Egyptian deities a place among their own [a]:



XVII. In the provinces subjected to the Roman government, there arose a new kind of religion, formed by a mixture of the antient rites of the conquered nations with those of the Romans. These nations, who, before their subjection, had their own gods, and their own particular religious institutions, were persuaded, by degrees, to admit into their worship a great number of the sacred rites and customs of their conquerors. The view of the Romans, in this change, was not only to confirm their authority by the powerful aid of religion, but also to abolish the inhuman rites which were performed by many of the barbarous nations who had received their yoke; and this change was effected partly by the prudence of the victors, partly by the levity of the vanquished, and by their ambition to please their new masters.

The Romans introduced their own rites among those of the conquered nations.

XVIII. When, from the sacred rites of the antient Romans, we pass to a review of the other religions that prevailed in the world, we shall find, that the most remarkable may be properly divided into two classes, of which the one will comprehend the religious systems which owe their existence to *political* views; and the other, those which seem to have been formed for *military* purposes. In the former class may be ranked the religions of most of the eastern nations, especially of the Persians, Egyptians, and Indians, which appear to have been solely calculated for the preservation of the state, the supporting of the royal authority and grandeur, the maintenance of public peace, and the advancement of civil virtues. Under the *military* class may be comprehended the religious system of the northern nations; since all the tra-

Systems of religion different from that of the Romans.

[a] See PETIT *ad leges Atticas*, lib. i. tit. i. p. 71.

ditions

CENT. I. PART I.

ditions that we find among the Germans, the Bretons, the Celts, and the Goths, concerning their divinities, have a manifeſt tendency to excite and nouriſh fortitude and ferocity, an inſenſibility of danger, and a contempt of life. An attentive enquiry into the religions of theſe reſpective nations, will abundantly verify what is here aſſerted.

The wiſer among the heathens could not remedy theſe evils.

XIX. None of theſe nations, indeed, ever arrived at ſuch an exceſs of univerſal barbarity and ignorance, as not to have ſome diſcerning men among them, who were ſenſible of the extravagance of all theſe religions. But of theſe ſagacious obſervers, ſome were deſtitute of the weight and authority that were neceſſary to remedy theſe over-grown evils; and others wanted the will to exert themſelves in ſuch a glorious cauſe. And the truth is, none of them had wiſdom equal to ſuch a ſolemn and arduous enterprize. This appears manifeſtly from the laborious, but uſeleſs efforts of ſome of the Greek and Roman philoſophers againſt the vulgar ſuperſtitions. Theſe venerable ſages delivered, in their writings, many ſublime things concerning the nature of God, and the duties incumbent upon men; they diſputed with ſagacity againſt the popular religion; but to all this they added ſuch chimerical notions, and ſuch abſurd ſubtilties of their own, as may ſerve to convince us, that it belongs to God alone, and not to man, to reveal the truth without any mixture of impurity or error.

Two kinds of philoſophy prevailed at the time of CHRIST's birth.

XX. About the time of CHRIST's appearance upon earth, there were two kinds of philoſophy which prevailed among the civilized nations. One was the philoſophy of the Greeks, adopted alſo by the Romans; and the other, that of the Orientals, which had a great number of votaries in *Perſia*, *Syria*, *Chaldæa*, *Egypt*, and even among the Jews. The former was diſtinguiſhed by the ſimple title of *philoſophy*. The latter was honoured

noured with the more pompous appellation of *ſcience*, or *knowledge* [*b*], ſince thoſe who embraced this latter ſect pretended to be the reſtorers of the knowledge of God, which was loſt in the world [*c*]. The followers of both theſe ſyſtems, in conſequence of vehement diſputes and diſſenſions about ſeveral points, ſubdivided themſelves into a variety of ſects. It is, however, to be obſerved, that all the ſects of the oriental philoſophy deduced their various tenets from one fundamental principle, which they held in common; whereas the Greeks were much divided even about the firſt principles of ſcience.

CENT. I. PART I.

As we ſhall have occaſion hereafter to ſpeak of the oriental philoſophy, we ſhall confine ourſelves here to the doctrines taught by the Grecian ſages, and ſhall give ſome account of the various ſects into which they were divided.

XXI. Among the Grecian ſects, there were ſome which declared openly againſt all religion; and others, who, though they acknowledged a deity, and admitted a religion, yet caſt a cloud over the truth, inſtead of exhibiting it in its genuine beauty and luſtre.

Some of the Grecian ſyſtems ſubverſive of all piety.

Of the former kind were the Epicureans and Academics. The Epicureans maintained, "That "the world aroſe from chance; that the gods "(whoſe exiſtence they did not dare to deny) "neither did, nor could, extend their providen-"tial care to human affairs; that the ſoul was "mortal; that *pleaſure* [*d*] was to be regarded as "the

☞ [*b*] Γνῶσις (*gnoſis*) in the Greek ſignifies *ſcience, or knowledge*, and from hence came the title of Gnoſtics, which this preſumptuous ſect claimed as due to their ſuperior light and penetration in divine *things*.

[*c*] St. Paul mentions and condemns both theſe kinds of philoſophy; the Greek, in the *Epiſtle to the Coloſſians*, ii. 8. and the Oriental, or Gnoſis, in the *Firſt Epiſtle to Timothy*, vi. 20.

☞ [*d*] The ambiguity of the word *pleaſure* has produced many diſputes in the explication of the Epicurean ſyſtem.

CENT. I. PART I.

"the ultimate end of man; and that *virtue* was "neither worthy of eſteem nor choice, but with a "view to its attainment." The Academics aſſerted the impoſſibility of arriving at truth, and held it uncertain, "Whether the gods exiſted or "not; whether the ſoul was mortal or immor-"tal; whether virtue were preferable to vice, "or vice to virtue." Theſe two ſects, though they ſtruck at the foundations of all religion, were the moſt numerous of all others at the birth of CHRIST, and were particularly encouraged by the liberality of the rich, and the protection of thoſe in power [*e*].

Others corrupted the truth. The Ariſtotelians.

XXII. We obſerved in the preceding ſection, that there was another kind of philoſophy, in which religion was admitted, but which was, at the ſame time, deficient by the obſcurity it caſt upon truth. Under the philoſophers of this claſs, may be reckoned the Platoniſts, the Stoics, and the followers of ARISTOTLE, whoſe ſubtile diſputations concerning God, religion, and the ſocial duties, were of little ſolid uſe to mankind. The nature of God, as it is explained by ARISTOTLE, is ſomething like the principle that gives motion

If by *pleaſure*, be underſtood only *ſenſual* gratifications, the tenet here advanced is indiſputably monſtrous. But if it be taken in a larger ſenſe, and extended to intellectual and moral objects; in what does the ſcheme of Epicurus, with reſpect to virtue, differ from the opinions of thoſe Chriſtian philoſophers, who maintain that ſelf-love is the *only* ſpring of all human affections and actions?

[*e*] That of the Epicureans was, however, the moſt numerous of the two, as appears from the teſtimony of CICERO, *De finibus*, &c. lib. i. cap. vii. lib. ii. cap. xiv. *Diſput. Tuſculan.* lib. v. cap. x. Hence the complaint, which JUVENAL makes in his XIIIth Satire, of the Atheiſm that prevailed at *Rome*, in thoſe excellent words:

"Sunt in fortunæ qui caſibus omnia ponunt,
"Et nullo credunt mundum rectore moveri,
"Natura volvente vices et lucis et anni;
"Atque ideo intrepidi quæcunque altaria tangunt."

to

to a machine; it is a nature happy in the contemplation of itſelf, and entirely regardleſs of human affairs; and ſuch a divinity, who differs but little from the god of Epicurus, cannot reaſonably be the object either of love or fear. With reſpect to the doctrine of this philoſopher concerning the human ſoul, it is uncertain, to ſay no more, whether he believed its immortality or not [*f*]. What then could be expected from ſuch a philoſophy? could any thing ſolid and ſatisfactory, in favour of piety and virtue, be hoped for from a ſyſtem which excluded from the univerſe a divine Providence, and inſinuated the mortality of the human ſoul?

XXIII. The god of the Stoics has ſomewhat more majeſty, than the divinity of ARISTOTLE; nor is he repreſented by thoſe philoſophers as ſitting above the ſtarry heavens in a ſupine indolence, and a perfect inattention to the affairs of the univerſe. Yet he is deſcribed as a corporeal being, united to matter by a neceſſary connexion, and ſubject to the determinations of an immutable *fate*, ſo that neither rewards nor puniſhments can properly proceed from him [*g*]. The learned alſo

The Stoics.

☞ [*f*] See the notes upon CUDWORTH's *Intellectual Syſtem of the Univerſe*, which Dr. MOSHEIM ſubjoined to his Latin tranſlation of that learned work, vol. i. p. 66. 500. vol. ii. p. 1171. See alſo upon the ſame ſubject MOURGUE's *Plan Theologique du Pythagoriſme*, tom. i. p. 79.

☞ [*g*] Thus is the ſtoical doctrine of *fate* generally repreſented; but not more generally than unjuſtly. Their *fatum*, when carefully and attentively examined, ſeems to have ſignified no more, in the intention of the wiſeſt of that ſect, than the plan of government formed originally in the divine mind, a plan all wiſe and perfect; and from which, of conſequence, the Supreme Being, morally ſpeaking, can never depart. So that when Jupiter is ſaid by the Stoics to be ſubject to immutable *fate*, this means no more than that he is ſubject to the wiſdom of his own counſels, and acts ever in conformity with his ſupreme perfections: The following remarkable paſſage of SENECA, drawn from the Vth chapter of his book *De Providentia*,

CENT. I. PART I.

alſo know that, in the philoſophy of this ſect, the exiſtence of the ſoul was confined to a certain period of time. Now it is manifeſt, that theſe tenets remove, at once, the ſtrongeſt motives to virtue, and the moſt powerful reſtraints upon vice; and, therefore, the ſtoical ſyſtem may be conſidered as a body of ſpecious and pompous doctrine, but, at the ſame time, as a body without nerves, or any principles of conſiſtence and vigour.

The Platonics.

XXIV. PLATO is generally looked upon as ſuperior to all the other philoſophers in wiſdom; and this eminent rank does not ſeem to have been undeſervedly conferred upon him. He taught that the univerſe was governed by a being, glorious in power and wiſdom, and poſſeſſed of a perfect liberty and independence. He extended alſo the views of mortals beyond the grave, and ſhewed them, in futurity, proſpects adapted to excite their hopes, and to work upon their fears. His doctrine, however, beſides the weakneſs of the foundations on which it reſts, and the obſcurity with which it is often expreſſed, has likewiſe many other conſiderable defects. It repreſents the Supreme Creator of the world as deſtitute of many perfections [*b*], and confined to a certain determinate portion of ſpace. Its deciſions, with

*dentia*, is ſufficient to confirm the explication we have here given of the *ſtoical fate*. "Ille ipſe omnium conditor et rector "SCRIPSIT quidem FATA, ſed ſequitur. Semper PARET, "ſemel JUSSIT."

☞ [*b*] This accuſation ſeems to be carried too far by Dr. MOSHEIM. It is not ſtrictly true, that the doctrine of PLATO repreſents the Supreme Being as deſtitute of *many* perfections. On the contrary, *all* the divine perfections are frequently acknowledged by that philoſopher. What probably gave occaſion to this animadverſion of our learned author, was the erroneous notion of PLATO, concerning the *invincible malignity* and corruption of *matter*, which the divine power had not been ſufficient to reduce entirely to order. Though this notion is, indeed, injurious to the omnipotence of God, yet it is not ſufficient to juſtify the cenſure now under conſideration.

reſpect

reſpect to the ſoul, and dæmons, are too much adapted to beget and nouriſh ſuperſtition. Nor will the moral philoſophy of PLATO appear worthy of ſuch a high degree of admiration, if we attentively examine and compare together its various parts, and reduce them to their principles [*i*].

Eclectics.

XXV. As then, in theſe different ſects, there were many things maintained that were highly unreaſonable and abſurd; and as a contentious ſpirit of oppoſition and diſpute prevailed among them all; certain men of true diſcernment, and of moderate characters, were of opinion, that none of theſe ſects were to be adhered to in all matters, but that it was rather wiſe to chuſe and extract out of each of them ſuch tenets and doctrines as were good and reaſonable, and to abandon and reject the reſt. This gave riſe to a new form of philoſophy in *Egypt*, and principally at *Alexandria*, which was called the *Eclectic*, whoſe founder, according to ſome, was POTAMON, an Alexandrian, though this opinion is not without its difficulties. It appears manifeſtly from the teſtimony of PHILO the Jew, who was himſelf one of this ſect, that this philoſophy was in a flouriſhing ſtate at *Alexandria*, when our Saviour was upon the earth. The Eclectics held PLATO in the higheſt eſteem, though they made no ſcruple to join with his doctrines, whatever they thought conformable to reaſon in the tenets and opinions of the other philoſophers [*k*].

The uſe of the foregoing chapter.

XXVI. The attentive reader will eaſily conclude, from the ſhort view that we have here given of the miſerable ſtate of the world at the

[*i*] There is an ample account of the defects of the Platonic philoſophy in a work entitled, *Defenſes des Peres accuſés de Platoniſme*, par FRANC. BALTUS: but there is more learning than accuracy in that performance.

[*k*] See GODOF. OLEARIUS, *De Philoſophia Eclectica*, JAC. BRUCKER, and others.

CENT. I. PART I.

birth of CHRIST, that mankind, in this period of darkneſs and corruption, ſtood highly in need of ſome divine teacher to convey to the mind *true and certain principles* of religion and wiſdom, and to recal wandering mortals to the ſublime paths of piety and virtue. The conſideration of this wretched condition of mankind will be alſo ſingularly uſeful to thoſe who are not ſufficiently acquainted with the advantages, the comforts, and the ſupport, which the ſublime doctrines of Chriſtianity are ſo proper to adminiſter in every ſtate, relation, and circumſtance of life. A ſet of miſerable and unthinking creatures treat with negligence, nay ſometimes with contempt, the religion of JESUS, not conſidering that they are indebted to it for all the good things which they ſo ungratefully enjoy.

## CHAP. II.

### *Concerning the civil and religious State of the* JEWISH NATION *at the birth of* CHRIST.

The Jews governed by Herod the Great.

I. THE ſtate of the Jews was not much better than that of the other nations at the time of CHRIST's appearance in the world. They were governed by HEROD, who was himſelf a tributary to the Roman people. This prince was ſurnamed the GREAT (ſurely from no other circumſtance than the greatneſs of his vices), and his government was a yoke of the moſt vexatious and oppreſſive kind. By a cruel, ſuſpicious, and overbearing temper, he drew upon himſelf the averſion of all, not excepting thoſe who lived upon his bounty. By a mad luxury and an affectation of magnificence far above his fortune, together with the moſt profuſe and immoderate largeſſes, he exhauſted the treaſures of that miſerable

ſerable nation. Under his adminiſtration, and by his means, the Roman luxury was received in *Paleſtine*, accompanied with the worſt vices of that licentious people [*l*]. In a word, *Judæa*, governed by HEROD, groaned under all that corruption, which might be expected from the authority and the example of a prince, who, though a Jew in outward profeſſion, was, in point of morals and practice, a contemner of all laws human and divine.

The ſtate of *Judæa* after the death of Herod.

II. After the death of this tyrant, the Romans divided the government of *Paleſtine* between his ſons. In this diviſion the one half of *Judæa* was given to ARCHELAUS, with the title of Exarch; and the other was divided between his two brothers, ANTIPAS and PHILIP. ARCHELAUS was a corrupt and wicked prince, and followed the example of his father's crimes in ſuch a manner, that the Jews, grown weary of his iniquitous adminiſtration, laid their complaints and grievances before AUGUSTUS, who delivered them from their oppreſſor, by baniſhing him from his dominions about ten years after the death of HEROD the GREAT. The kingdom of this dethroned prince was reduced to the form of a province, and added to the juriſdiction of the governor of *Syria*, to the great detriment of the Jews, whoſe heavieſt calamities were owing to this change, and whoſe final deſtruction was its undoubted effect in the appointment of Providence.

The calamities that fell upon the Jewiſh nation.

III. However ſevere the authority was, which the Romans exerciſed over the Jews, yet it did

[*l*] See on this ſubject, CHRIST. NOLDII *Hiſtoria Idumæa*, which is annexed to HAVERCAMP's edition of *Joſephus*, vol. ii. p. 333. See alſo BASNAGE, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, tom. i. part I. p. 27. NORIS, *Cenotaph. Piſan.* PRIDEAUX, *Hiſtory of the Jews*; CELLARIUS, his *Hiſtoria Herodum*, in the firſt part of his Academical Diſſertations, p. 207; and above all, JOSEPHUS the Jewiſh Hiſtorian.

CENT. I. PART I.

not extend to the entire ſuppreſſion of all their civil and religious privileges. The Jews were, in ſome meaſure, governed by their own laws, and they were permitted the enjoyment of the religion they had received from the glorious founder of their church and ſtate. The adminiſtration of religious ceremonies was committed, as before, to the high-prieſt, and to the ſanhedrim; to the former of whom the order of the prieſts and levites was in the uſual ſubordination; and the form of outward worſhip, except in a very few points, had ſuffered no viſible change. But, on the other hand, it is impoſſible to expreſs the inquietude and diſguſt, the calamities and vexations, which this unhappy nation ſuffered from the preſence of the Romans, whom their religion obliged them to look upon as a polluted and idolatrous people, and, in a more particular manner, from the avarice and cruelty of the Prætors, and the frauds and extortions of the Publicans. So that, all things conſidered, their condition, who lived under the government of the other ſons of HEROD, was much more ſupportable than the ſtate of thoſe, who were immediately ſubject to the Roman juriſdiction.

*Theſe calamities increaſed by the prieſts and rulers of the Jewiſh nation.*

IV. It was not, however, from the Romans alone, that the calamities of this miſerable people proceeded. Their own rulers multiplied their vexations, and hindered them from enjoying any little comforts that were left to them by the Roman magiſtrates. The leaders of the people, and the chief prieſts, were, according to the account of JOSEPHUS, profligate wretches, who had purchaſed their places by bribes, or by acts of iniquity, and who maintained their ill-acquired authority by the moſt flagitious and abominable crimes. The ſubordinate and inferior members were infected with the corruption of the head; the prieſts, and thoſe who poſſeſſed any ſhadow of

of authority, were become diſſolute and abandoned to the higheſt degree; while the multitude, ſet on by theſe corrupt examples, ran headlong into every ſort of iniquity, and by their endleſs ſeditions, robberies, and extortions, armed againſt them both the juſtice of God, and the vengeance of men.

The Jewiſh religion much corrupted among the multitude.

V. Two religions flouriſhed at this time in *Paleſtine*, *viz*, the Jewiſh and the Samaritan, whoſe reſpective followers beheld thoſe of the oppoſite ſect with the utmoſt averſion. The Jewiſh religion ſtands expoſed to our view in the books of the Old Teſtament; but at the time of CHRIST's appearance, it had loſt much of its original nature, and of its primitive aſpect. Errors of a very pernicious kind had infected the whole body of the people, and the more learned part of the nation were divided upon points of the higheſt conſequence. All looked for a deliverer, but not for ſuch a one as God had promiſed. Inſtead of a meek and ſpiritual Saviour, they expected a formidable and warlike prince, to break off their chains, and ſet them at liberty from the Roman yoke. All regarded the whole of religion, as conſiſting in the rites appointed by MOSES, and in the performance of ſome external acts of duty towards the Gentiles. They were all horribly unanimous in excluding from the hopes of eternal life all the other nations of the world; and, as a conſequence of this odious ſyſtem, they treated them with the utmoſt rigour and inhumanity, when any occaſion was offered them. And beſides theſe corrupt and vicious principles, there prevailed among them ſeveral abſurd and ſuperſtitious notions concerning the divine nature, inviſible powers, magic, *&c.* which they had partly brought with them from the Babylonian captivity, and partly derived from the

CENT. I. PART I.

the Egyptians, Syrians, and Arabians, who lived in their neighbourhood.

And alſo among the doctors, who were divided into various ſects.

VI. Religion had not a better fate among the learned than among the multitude. The ſupercilious doctors, who vaunted their profound knowledge of the law, and their deep ſcience in ſpiritual and divine things, were conſtantly ſhewing their fallibility and their ignorance by their religious differences, and were divided into a great variety of ſects. Of theſe ſects three have, in a great meaſure, eclipſed the reſt, both by the number of their adherents, and alſo by the weight and authority which they acquired. Theſe were the Phariſees, the Sadducees, and the Eſſenes [*m*]. There is frequent mention made of the two former in the ſacred writings; but the knowledge of the rites and doctrines of the latter, is to be derived from JOSEPHUS, PHILO, and other hiſtorians. Theſe three illuſtrious ſects agreed in the fundamental principles of the Jewiſh religion, while, at the ſame time, they were involved in endleſs diſputes upon points of the higheſt importance, and about matters in which the ſalvation of mankind was directly concerned; and their controverſies could not but be highly detrimental to the rude and illiterate multitude, as every one muſt eaſily perceive.

The three famous Jewiſh ſects divided upon various points;

VII. It may not be improper to mention here ſome of the principal matters that were debated among theſe famous ſects. One of the main points of controverſy was: *Whether the* WRITTEN LAW *alone, was of divine authority.* The Phari-

[*m*] Beſides theſe more illuſtrious ſects, there were ſeveral of inferior note, which prevailed among the Jews at the time of CHRIST's appearance. The Herodians are mentioned by the ſacred writers, the Gaulonites by JOSEPHUS, and others by EPIPHANIUS and HEGESIPPUS in EUSEBIUS; nor is it rational to look upon theſe ſects as fictitious.

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ſees added to this *law* another, which had been received by oral tradition. This the Sadducees and Eſſenes rejected as of no authority, and adhered to the *written law* as the only divine rule of obedience. They differed alſo in their opinions concerning the true *ſenſe of the law*. For, while the Phariſees attributed to the ſacred text a double ſenſe, one of which was obvious, regarding only the *words*, and another myſterious, relating to the intimate nature of the *things* expreſſed; and while the Sadducees maintained that nothing further was delivered by the law, than that which was contained in the ſignification of the words; the Eſſenes, at leaſt the greateſt part of that ſect, entertained an opinion different from both of theſe. They aſſerted, in their jargon, that the words of the law were abſolutely void of all power, and that the things expreſſed by them, were the images of holy and celeſtial objects. Theſe litigious ſubtilties and unintelligible wranglings, about the nature and ſenſe of the divine word, were ſucceeded by a controverſy of the greateſt moment, concerning the rewards and puniſhments of the law, particularly with reſpect to their extent. The Phariſees were of opinion, that theſe rewards and puniſhments extended both to the ſoul and body, and that their duration was prolonged beyond the limits of this tranſitory ſtate. The Sadducees aſſigned to them the ſame period that concludes this mortal life. The Eſſenes differed from both; and maintained that future rewards and puniſhments extended to the ſoul alone, and not to the body, which they conſidered as a maſs of malignant matter, and as the priſon of the immortal ſpirit.

VIII. Theſe differences, in matters of ſuch vaſt conſequence, between the three famous ſects above mentioned, produced none of thoſe injurious

But exerciſed reciprocal toleration towards each other.

CENT. I. PART I.

rious and malignant effects, which are too often ſeen to ariſe from religious controverſies. But ſuch, as have any acquaintance with the hiſtory of theſe times, will not be ſo far deceived by this ſpecious appearance of moderation, as to attribute it to noble or generous principles. They will look through the fair outſide, and ſee that their mutual fears of each other were the latent reaſon of this apparent charity and mutual forbearance. The Sadducees enjoyed the favour and protection of the great. The Phariſees, on the other hand, were extremely high in the eſteem of the multitude. And hence they were both ſecured againſt the attempts of each other, and lived in peace, notwithſtanding the diverſity of their religious ſentiments. The government of the Romans contributed alſo to the maintenance of this mutual toleration and tranquillity, as they were ever ready to ſuppreſs and puniſh whatever had the appearance of tumult and ſedition. We may add to all this, that the Sadducean principles rendered that ſect naturally averſe to all ſorts of altercation and tumult. Libertiniſm has for its objects eaſe and pleaſure, and chuſes rather to ſlumber in the arms of a fallacious ſecurity, than to expoſe itſelf to the painful activity, which is required both in the ſearch and in the defence of truth.

Eſſenes.

IX. The Eſſenes had little occaſion to quarrel with the other ſects, as they dwelt generally in a rural ſolitude, far removed from the view and commerce of men. This ſingular ſect, which was ſpread abroad through *Syria*, *Egypt*, and the neighbouring countries, maintained, that religion conſiſted wholly in contemplation and ſilence. By a rigorous abſtinence alſo, and a variety of penitential exerciſes and mortifications, which they ſeem to have borrowed from the Egyptians,

tians [*n*], they endeavoured to arrive at ſtill higher degrees of perfection in virtue. There prevailed, however, among the members of this ſect, a conſiderable difference both in point of opinion and diſcipline. Some paſſed their lives in a ſtate of celibacy, and employed their time in educating and inſtructing the children of others. Others embraced the ſtate of matrimony, which they conſidered as lawful, when entered into with the ſole deſign of propagating the ſpecies, and not to ſatisfy the demands of luſt. Thoſe of the Eſſenes who dwelt in *Syria*, held the poſſibility of appeaſing the deity by ſacrifices, though in a manner quite different from that of the Jews; by which, however, it appears that they had not utterly rejected the literal ſenſe of the Moſaic law. But thoſe who wandered in the deſarts of *Egypt* were of very different ſentiments: they maintained, that no offering was acceptable to God but that of a ſerene and compoſed mind, addicted to the contemplation of divine things; and it is manifeſt from hence, that they looked upon the law of Moſes as an allegorical ſyſtem of ſpiritual and myſterious truths, and renounced in its explication all regard to the outward letter [*o*].

X. The Therapeutæ, of whom PHILO the Jew makes particular mention in his treatiſe concerning *Contemplative Life*, are ſuppoſed to have been a branch of this ſect. From this notion aroſe the diviſion of the Eſſenes into *theoretical* and *practical*. The former of theſe were wholly devoted to contemplation, and are the ſame with the Therapeutæ; while the latter employed a part of their time in the performance of the du- The Therapeutæ.

[*n*] See the annotations of Holſtenius to Porphyry's Life of Pythagoras, p. 11. of the edition publiſhed by Kuſter.

[*o*] See MOSHEIM's obſervations on a ſmall treatiſe of the learned CUDWORTH's, concerning the true notion of the Lord's ſupper, p. 4.

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CENT. I. PART 1.

ties of active life. Whether this diviſion be accurate or not, is a matter which I will not take upon me to determine. But I ſee nothing in the laws or manners of the Therapeutæ, that ſhould lead us to conſider them as a branch of the Eſſenes; nor indeed has PHILO aſſerted any ſuch thing. There may have been, ſurely, many other fanatical tribes among the Jews, beſides that of the Eſſenes; nor ſhould a reſemblance of principles always induce us to make a coalition of ſects. It is however, certain, that the Therapeutæ were neither Chriſtians nor Egyptians, as ſome have erroneouſly imagined. They were undoubtedly Jews; nay, they gloried in that title, and ſtyled themſelves, with particular affectation, the true diſciples of MOSES, though their manner of life was equally repugnant to the inſtitutions of that great lawgiver and to the dictates of right reaſon, and ſhewed them to be a tribe of melancholy and wrong-headed Enthuſiaſts [*p*].

The moral doctrine of theſe ſects.

XI. None of theſe ſects, indeed, ſeemed to have the intereſts of real and true piety at heart; nor were their principles and diſcipline at all adapted to the advancement of pure and ſubſtantial virtue. The Phariſees courted popular applauſe by a vain oſtentation of pretended ſanctity, and an auſtere method of living, while, in reality, they were ſtrangers to true holineſs, and were inwardly defiled with the moſt criminal diſpoſitions, with which our Saviour frequently reproaches them. They alſo treated with more veneration the commandments and traditions of men, than the ſacred precepts and laws of

[*p*] The principal writers, who have given accounts of the Therapeutæ, are mentioned by Jo. ALBERT FABRICIUS in the ivth chapter of his *Lux Salutaris Evangelii toto orbe exorians*, p. 55.

God.

God [q]. The Sadducees, by denying a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, removed, at once, the moſt powerful incentives to virtue, and the moſt effectual reſtraints upon vice, and thus gave new vigour to every ſinful paſſion, and a full encouragement to the indulgence of every irregular deſire. As to the Eſſenes, they were a fanatical and ſuperſtitious tribe, who placed religion in a certain ſort of ſeraphic indolence, and, looking upon piety to God as incompatible with any ſocial attachment to men, diſſolved, by this pernicious doctrine, all the great bonds of human ſociety.

The multitude ſunk in ſuperſtition, and corruption.

XII. While then ſuch darkneſs, ſuch errors and diſſenſions prevailed among thoſe, who aſſumed the character and authority of perſons diſtinguiſhed by their ſuperior ſanctity and wiſdom, it will not be difficult to imagine, how totally corrupt the religion and morals of the multitude muſt have been. They were, accordingly, ſunk in the moſt deplorable ignorance of God, and of divine things; and had no notion of any other way of rendering themſelves acceptable to the Supreme Being, than by ſacrifices, waſhings, and the other external rites and ceremonies of the Moſaic law. Hence proceeded that diſſolution of manners, and that profligate wickedneſs, which prevailed among the Jews, during CHRIST's miniſtry upon earth. And hence the Divine Saviour compares that people to a flock of ſheep, which wandered without a ſhepherd; and their doctors to men, who, though deprived themſelves of ſight, yet pretended to ſhew the way to others [r].

The CABBALA, a ſource of many errors among the Jews.

XIII. To all theſe corruptions, both in point of doctrine and practice, which reigned among

[q] Matt. xxiii. 13, 14, &c.
[r] Matt. x. 6. xv. 24, 25. John, ix. 39.

CENT. I. PART I.

the Jews at the time of CHRIST's coming, we may add the attachment which many of them diſcovered to the tenets of the oriental philoſophy concerning the origin of the world, and to the doctrine of the CABBALA, which was undoubtedly derived from thence. That conſiderable numbers of the Jews had imbibed the errors of this fantaſtic ſyſtem, appears evidently, both from the books of the New Teſtament, and from the ancient hiſtory of the Chriſtian Church [*s*]: and it is alſo certain, that many of the Gnoſtic ſects were founded by Jews. Thoſe among that degenerate people, who adopted this chimerical philoſophy, muſt have differed vaſtly from the reſt in their opinions concerning the God of the Old Teſtament, the origin of the world, the character and doctrine of MOSES, and the nature and myſtery of the MESSIAH; ſince they maintained, that the creator of this world was a being different from the Supreme God, and that his dominion over the human race was to be deſtroyed by the MESSIAH. Every one muſt ſee that this enormous ſyſtem was fruitful of errors, deſtructive of the very foundations of Judaiſm.

The external worſhip of God corrupted alſo by vain rites and human inventions.

XIV. If any part of the Jewiſh religion was leſs disfigured and corrupted than the reſt, it was, certainly, the form of external worſhip, which was eſtabliſhed by the law of MOSES. And yet many learned men have obſerved, that a great variety of rites were introduced into the ſervice of the temple, of which no traces are to be found in the ſacred writings. The inſtitution of theſe additional ceremonies was manifeſtly owing to thoſe changes and revolutions, which rendered the Jews more converſant with the na-

[*s*] See JOH. CHR. WOLF. *Biblioth. Ebraica*, vol. ii. lib. vii. cap. i. § ix. p. 206.

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tions round about them, than they had formerly been. For when they ſaw the ſacred rites of the Greeks and Romans, they were taken with ſeveral of the ceremonies that were uſed in the worſhip of the heathen deities, and did not heſitate to adopt them in the ſervice of the true God, and add them as an ornament to the rites which they had received by divine appointment [*t*].

The cauſes of the corruption, in doctrine and morals, that reigned among the Jews.

XV. But whence ſuch enormous degrees of corruption in that very nation which GOD had, in a peculiar manner, ſeparated from an idolatrous world to be the depoſitory of divine truth? Various cauſes may be aſſigned, in order to give a ſatisfactory account of this matter. *Firſt*, It is certain, that the anceſtors of thoſe Jews, who lived in the time of our Saviour, had brought from *Chaldæa*, and the neighbouring countries, many extravagant and idle fancies, which were utterly unknown to the original founders of the nation [*u*]. The conqueſt of *Aſia*, by ALEXANDER the GREAT, was, alſo, an event from which we may date a new acceſſion of errors to the Jewiſh ſyſtem; ſince, in conſequence of that revolution, the manners and opinions of the Greeks began to ſpread themſelves among the Perſians, Syrians, Arabians, and likewiſe among the Jews, who, before that period, were entirely unacquainted with letters and philoſophy. We may, further, rank among the cauſes that contributed to corrupt the religion and manners of the Jews, their voyages into the adjacent countries, eſpecially *Egypt* and *Phœnicia*, in purſuit of wealth.

[*t*] See the learned work of SPENCER, *De legibus Hebræorum*, in the ivth book of which he treats expreſsly of thoſe Hebrew rites which were borrowed from the Gentile worſhip, vol. ii. p. 1086, edition of *Cambridge*.

[*u*] See GALE's obſervations on Jamblichus, *De myſteriis Egyptiorum*, p. 206. JOSEPHUS acknowledges the ſame thing in his *Jewiſh Antiquities*, book iii. ch. vii. § 2.

For, with the treaſures of theſe corrupt and ſuperſtitious nations, they brought home alſo their pernicious errors, and their idle fictions, which were imperceptibly blended with their religious ſyſtem. Nor ought we to omit, in this enumeration, the peſtilential influence of the wicked reigns of HEROD and his ſons, and the enormous inſtances of idolatry, error, and licentiouſneſs, which this unhappy people had conſtantly before their eyes in the religion and manners of the Roman governors and ſoldiers, which, no doubt, contributed much to the progreſs of their national ſuperſtition and corruption of manners. We might add here many more facts and circumſtances, to illuſtrate further the matter under conſideration; but theſe will be readily ſuggeſted to ſuch as have the leaſt acquaintance with the Jewiſh hiſtory from the time of the Maccabees.

Amidſt this general corruption, ſome remains of piety were to be found.

XVI. It is indeed worthy of obſervation, that, corrupted as the Jews were with the errors and ſuperſtitions of the neighbouring nations, they ſtill preſerved a zealous attachment to the law of MOSES, and were extremely careful that it ſhould not ſuffer any diminution of its credit, or loſe any the leaſt degree of that veneration, that was due to its divine authority. Hence *ſynagogues* were erected throughout the province of *Judæa*, in which the people aſſembled for the purpoſes of divine worſhip, and to hear their doctors interpret and explain the holy ſcriptures. There were, beſides, in the more populous towns, public ſchools, in which learned men were appointed to inſtruct the youth in the knowledge of divine things, and alſo in other branches of ſcience [*w*]. And it is beyond all doubt, that theſe inſtitutions contributed to

[*w*] See CAMP. VITRINGA, *De ſynagoga vetere*, lib. iii. cap. v. p. 667. and lib. i. cap. v. p. 133. vii. p. 156.

maintain

maintain the law in its primitive authority, and to ſtem the torrent of abounding iniquity.

The Samaritans.

XVII. The Samaritans, who celebrated divine worſhip in the temple that was built on mount *Gerizim*, lay under the burthen of the ſame evils that oppreſſed the Jews, with whom they lived in the bittereſt enmity, and were alſo, like them, highly inſtrumental in increaſing their own calamities. We learn from the moſt authentic hiſtories of theſe times, that the Samaritans ſuffered as much as the Jews, from troubles and diviſions fomented by the intrigues of factious ſpirits, though their religious ſects were yet leſs numerous than thoſe of the latter. Their religion, alſo, was much more corrupted than that of the Jews, as CHRIST himſelf declares in his converſation with the woman of *Samaria*; though it appears, at the ſame time, that their notions concerning the offices and miniſtry of the MESSIAH, were much more juſt and conformable to truth, than thoſe which were entertained at *Jeruſalem* [*x*]. Upon the whole it is certain, that the Samaritans mixed the profane errors of the Gentiles, with the ſacred doctrines of the Jews,

☞ [*x*] CHRIST inſinuates, on the contrary, in the ſtrongeſt manner, the ſuperiority of the Jewiſh worſhip to that of the Samaritans, John iv. 22. See alſo, on this head, 2 Kings xvii. 29. The paſſage to which Dr. MOSHEIM refers, as a proof that the Samaritans had juſter notions of the MESSIAH than the Jews, is the 25th verſe of the chapter of St. John, already cited, where the woman of Samaria ſays to JESUS, *I know that* MESSIAH *cometh which is called* CHRIST: *when he is come, he will tell us all things.* But this paſſage ſeems much too vague to juſtify the concluſion of our learned hiſtorian. Beſides, the confeſſion of one perſon, who may poſſibly have had ſome ſingular and extraordinary advantages, is not a proof, that the nation in general entertained the ſame ſentiments, eſpecially ſince we know that the Samaritans had corrupted the ſervice of God by a profane mixture of the groſſeſt idolatries.

CENT. I. PART I.

and were exceſſively corrupted by the idolatrous cuſtoms of the Pagan nations [*y*].

The ſtate of the Jews out of *Paleſtine.*

XVIII. The Jews multiplied ſo prodigiouſly, that the narrow bounds of *Paleſtine* were no longer ſufficient to contain them. They poured, therefore, their increaſing numbers into the neighbouring countries, and that with ſuch rapidity, that, at the time of CHRIST's birth, there was ſcarcely a province in the empire, where they were not found carrying on commerce, and exerciſing other lucrative arts. They were maintained, in foreign countries, againſt injurious treatment and violence, by the ſpecial edicts and protection of the magiſtrate [*z*]; and this, indeed, was abſolutely neceſſary, ſince, in moſt places, the remarkable difference of their religion and manners, from thoſe of the other nations, expoſed them to the hatred and indignation of the ignorant and bigoted multitude. All this appears to have been moſt ſingularly and wiſely directed by the adorable hand of an interpoſing providence, to the end that this people, which was the ſole depoſitary of the true religion, and of the knowledge of one Supreme God, being ſpread abroad through the whole earth, might be every where, by their example, a reproach to ſuperſtition, contribute in ſome meaſure to check it, and thus prepare the way for that yet fuller diſcovery of divine truth, which was to ſhine upon the world from the miniſtry and goſpel of the Son of God.

[*y*] Thoſe who deſire an exact account of the principal authors that have written concerning the Samaritans, will find it in the learned work of Jo. GOTTLOB CARPZOVIUS, entitled, *Critica S. Vet. Teſtam.* part II. cap. iv. p. 595.

[*z*] See the account, publiſhed at *Leyden* 1712, by JAMES GRONOVIUS, of the Roman and Aſiatic edicts in favour of the Jews, allowing them the free and ſecure exerciſe of their religion, throughout all the cities of the *Leſſer Aſia.*

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

### *Concerning the life and actions of* JESUS CHRIST.

CENT. I. PART I.

The birth of CHRIST.

I. THE errors and diſorders that we have now been conſidering, required ſomething far above human wiſdom and power to diſpel and remove them, and to deliver mankind from the miſerable ſtate to which they were reduced by them. Therefore, towards the concluſion of the reign of HEROD the GREAT, the Son of God deſcended upon earth, and, taking upon him the human nature, appeared to men under the ſublime characters of an infallible teacher, an all-ſufficient mediator, and a ſpiritual and immortal king. The place of his birth was *Bethlehem*, in the land of *Paleſtine*. The year, in which it happened, has not hitherto been fixed with certainty, notwithſtanding the deep and laborious reſearches of the learned on that matter. There is nothing ſurpriſing in this, when we conſider that the firſt Chriſtians laboured under the ſame difficulties, and were divided in their opinions, concerning the time of CHRIST's birth [*a*]. That which appears moſt probable, is, that it happened about a year and ſix months before the death of HEROD, in the year of Rome 748 or 749 [*b*]. The uncertainty, however, of this point is of no ſort of conſequence. We know that the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS has ſhone upon the world. And, though we cannot fix the preciſe period in which he aroſe, this will not hin-

[*a*] The learned JOHN ALBERT FABRICIUS has collected all the opinions of the learned, concerning the year of CHRIST's birth, in his *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* cap. vii. § ix. p. 187.

[*b*] Matt. iii. 2, &c. John i. 22, &c.

CENT. I. PART I.

der us from enjoying the direction and influence of his vital and ſalutary beams.

The accounts given of CHRIST during his infancy and youth.

II. Four inſpired writers, who have tranſmitted to us an account of the life and actions of JESUS CHRIST, mention particularly his birth, his lineage, his family, and his parents; but they ſay very little concerning his infancy and his earlier youth. Not long after his birth, he was conducted by his parents into *Egypt*, that he might be there out of the reach of HEROD's cruelty [*c*]. When he was but twelve years old, he diſputed, in the temple, with the moſt learned of the Jewiſh doctors, concerning the ſublime truths of religion. And the reſt of his life, until the thirtieth year of his age, was ſpent in the obſcurity of a private condition, and conſecrated to the duties of filial obedience [*d*]. This is all that the wiſdom of God has permitted us to know, with certainty, of CHRIST, before he entered upon his public miniſtry; nor is the ſtory of his having followed the trade of his adopted father JOSEPH built upon any ſure foundation. There have been, indeed, ſeveral writers, who, either through the levity of a wanton imagination, or with a deſign to attract the admiration of the multitude, have invented a ſeries of the moſt extravagant and ridiculous fables, in order to give an account of this obſcure part of the Saviour's life [*e*].

John, the fore-runner of the Meſſiah.

III. JESUS began his public miniſtry in the thirtieth year of his age; and to render it more ſolemn and affecting to the Jews, a man, whoſe name was JOHN, the ſon of a Jewiſh prieſt, a

[*c*] Matt. ii. 13.

[*d*] Luke ii. 51, 52.

[*e*] See the account, which the abovementioned ALBERT FABRICIUS has given of theſe romantic triflers, in his *Codex Apocryphus N. T.* tom. i.

perſon

perſon of great gravity alſo, and much reſpected on account of the auſtere dignity of his life and manners, was commanded by God to proclaim to the people the coming of the MESSIAH, that had been promiſed to their fathers. This extraordinary man called himſelf the fore-runner of the MESSIAH. Filled with a holy zeal and a divine fervour, he cried aloud to the Jewiſh nation to depart from their tranſgreſſions, and to purify their hearts, that they might thus partake of the bleſſings, which the Son of God was now come to offer to the world. The exhortations of this reſpectable meſſenger were not without effect; and thoſe who, moved by his ſolemn admonitions, had formed the reſolution of correcting their evil diſpoſitions and amending their lives, were initiated into the kingdom of the Redeemer by the ceremony of immerſion, or baptiſm [*f*]. CHRIST himſelf, before he began his miniſtry, deſired to be ſolemnly baptized by JOHN in the waters of *Jordan*, that he might not, in any point, neglect to anſwer the demands of the Jewiſh law.

CENT. I. PART I.

IV. It is not neceſſary to enter here into a particular detail of the life and actions of JESUS CHRIST. All Chriſtians muſt be perfectly well acquainted with them. They muſt know, that, during the ſpace of three years, and amidſt the deepeſt trials of affliction and diſtreſs, he inſtructed the Jewiſh nation in the will and counſels of the Moſt High, and omitted nothing, in the courſe of his miniſtry, that could contribute either to gain the multitude, or to charm the wiſe. Every one knows, that his life was a continued ſcene of the moſt perfect ſanctity, and the pureſt and moſt active virtue; not only without ſpot, but alſo beyond the reach of ſuſpicion. And it is alſo well known, that by miracles of the moſt

The life of CHRIST.

[*f*] Matt. iii. 6. John i. 23.

CENT. I. PART I.

ſtupendous kind, and not more ſtupendous than ſalutary and beneficent, he diſplayed to the univerſe the truth of that religion which he brought with him from above, and demonſtrated the reality of his divine commiſſion in the moſt illuſtrious manner.

The election of the apoſtles, and of the LXX diſciples.

V. As this divine religion was to be propagated to the utmoſt ends of the earth, it was neceſſary that CHRIST ſhould chuſe a certain number of perſons, to accompany him conſtantly through the whole courſe of his miniſtry; that thus they might be faithful and reſpectable witneſſes of the ſanctity of his life and the grandeur of his miracles, to the remoteſt nations; and alſo tranſmit to the lateſt poſterity a genuine account of his ſublime doctrines, and of the nature and end of the goſpel-diſpenſation. Therefore JESUS choſe, out of the multitude that attended his diſcourſes, twelve perſons, whom he ſeparated from the reſt by the name of *Apoſtles*. Theſe men were illiterate, poor, and of mean extraction, and ſuch alone were truly proper to anſwer the views of the divine Saviour. He avoided making uſe of the miniſtry of perſons endowed with the advantages of fortune or birth, or enriched with the treaſures of eloquence and learning, leſt the fruits of this embaſſy, and the progreſs of the goſpel, ſhould be attributed to human and natural cauſes [*g*]. Theſe apoſtles were ſent but once to preach to the Jews during the life of CHRIST [*h*]. He choſe to keep them about his own perſon, that they might be thoroughly inſtructed in the affairs of his kingdom. That the multitude, however, might not be deſtitute of teachers to enlighten them with the knowledge of the truth, CHRIST appointed LXX diſciples to preach the glad tidings of life eternal throughout the whole province of *Judæa* [*i*].

[*g*] 1 Cor. i. 21. [*h*] Matt. x. 7. [*i*] Luke x. 1.

VI.

VI. The researches of the learned have been employed to find out the reason of CHRIST's fixing the number of the apostles to *twelve*, and that of the disciples to *seventy*; and various conjectures have been applied to the solution of this question. But since it is manifest, from the words of our Saviour himself [*k*], that he intended the number of the XII apostles as an allusion to that of the tribes of ISRAEL; it can scarcely be doubted, that he was willing to insinuate by this appointment, that he was the supreme lord and high-priest of these twelve tribes, into which the Jewish nation was divided. And as the number of disciples answers evidently to that of the senators, of whom the council of the people, or the sanhedrim, was composed, there is a high degree of probability in the conjecture of those, who think, that CHRIST, by the choice of the *seventy*, designed to admonish the Jews, that the authority of their sanhedrim was now at an end, and that all power, with respect to religious matters, was vested in him alone.

Why the number of the apostles was fixed to XII, and that of the disciples to LXX.

VII. The ministry of the divine Saviour was confined to the Jews; nor, while he remained upon earth, did he permit his apostles or disciples to extend their labours beyond this distinguished nation [*l*]. At the same time, if we consider the illustrious acts of mercy and omnipotence, that were performed by CHRIST, it will be natural to conclude that his fame must have been very soon spread abroad in other countries. We learn from writers of no small note, that ABGARUS, king of *Edessa*, being seized with a severe and dangerous illness, wrote to our blessed Lord to implore his assistance; and that JESUS not only sent him a gracious answer, but also accompanied it with his picture, as a mark of

CHRIST's fame extends beyond *Judæa*.

[*k*] Matt. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30.
[*l*] Matt. x. 5, 6. xv. 24.

his

CENT. I. PART I.

his eſteem for that pious prince [*m*]. Theſe letters are ſtill extant. But they are juſtly looked upon as fictitious by moſt writers, who alſo go yet farther, and treat the whole ſtory of ABGARUS as entirely fabulous, and unworthy of credit [*n*]. I will not pretend to aſſert the genuineneſs of theſe letters; but I ſee no reaſon of ſufficient weight to deſtroy the credibility of the whole ſtory, which is ſuppoſed to have given occaſion to them [*o*].

[*m*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccl.* lib. i. cap. xiii. p. 21. Jo. ALBERT FABRIC. *Codex Apocryphus N. T.* tom. i. p. 317.

[*n*] See BASNAGE, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, vol. i. cap. xviii. p. 500. As alſo THEOPH. SIGF. BAYERUS, *Hiſtoria Edeſſena et Oſroëna*, lib. iii. p. 104. Jos. SIMON ASSEMANUS, *Bibliotb. Oriental. Clement. Vaticanæ*, tom i. p. 554.

☞ [*o*] There is no author who has diſcuſſed this queſtion (concerning the authenticity of the letters of CHRIST and ABGARUS, and the truth of the whole ſtory) with ſuch learning and judgment, as the late Mr. JONES, in the ſecond volume of his excellent work, entitled, *A new and full method of ſettling the canonical authority of the New Teſtament*. Notwithſtanding the opinions of ſuch celebrated names as PARKER, CAVE, and GRABE, in favour of theſe letters, and the hiſtory to which they relate, Mr. JONES has offered reaſons to prove the whole fictitious, which ſeem unanſwerable, independent of the authorities of RIVET, CHEMNITIUS, WALTHER, SIMON, DU PIN, WAKE, SPANHEIM, FABRICIUS, and LE CLERC, which he oppoſes to the three above mentioned. It is remarkable that this ſtory is not mentioned by any writer before EUSEBIUS; that it is but little taken notice of by ſucceeding writers; that the whole affair was unknown to CHRIST's Apoſtles, and to the Chriſtians, their contemporaries, as is manifeſt from the early diſputes about the method of receiving Gentile converts into the church, which this ſtory, had it been true, muſt have entirely decided. As to the letters, no doubt can be made of their ſpurioufneſs; ſince, if CHRIST had written a letter to ABGARUS, it would have been a part of Sacred Scripture, and would have been placed at the head of all the books of the New Teſtament. See LARDNER's *Collection of Ancient Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies*, vol. i. p. 297, &c. It muſt be obſerved in behalf of EUSEBIUS, that he relates this ſtory, as drawn from the archives of EDESSA.

VIII.

" VIII. A great number of the Jews, ſtruck with thoſe illuſtrious marks of a divine authority and power, that ſhone forth in the miniſtry and actions of CHRIST, regarded him as the Son of God, the true MESSIAH. The rulers of the people, and more eſpecially the chief prieſts and Phariſees, whoſe licentiouſneſs and hypocriſy he cenſured with a noble and generous freedom, laboured with ſucceſs, by the help of their paſſions, to extinguiſh in their breaſts the conviction of his celeſtial miſſion; or, at leaſt, to ſuppreſs the effects it was adapted to produce upon their conduct. Fearing alſo leſt the miniſtry of CHRIST ſhould tend to diminiſh their credit, and to deprive them of the advantages they derived from the impious abuſe of their authority in religious matters; they laid ſnares for his life, which, for a conſiderable time, were without effect. They ſucceeded, at length, by the infernal treaſon of an apoſtate diſciple, by the treachery of JUDAS, who diſcovered the retreat which his divine maſter had choſen for the purpoſes of meditation and repoſe, and thus delivered him into the mercileſs hands of a brutal ſoldiery.

The ſucceſs of CHRIST's miniſtry.

IX. In conſequence of this, JESUS was firſt brought before the Jewiſh high-prieſt and ſanhedrim, before whom he was accuſed of having violated the law, and blaſphemed the majeſty of God. Dragged from thence to the tribunal of PILATE the Roman prætor, he was there charged with ſeditious enterpriſes, and with treaſon againſt CÆSAR. Both theſe accuſations were ſo evidently falſe, and deſtitute even of every appearance of truth, that they muſt have been rejected by any judge, who acted upon the principles of common equity. But the clamours of an enraged populace, ſet on by the impious inſtigations of their prieſts and rulers, intimidated PILATE, and engaged him, though with the utmoſt reluctance,

Death of CHRIST.

CENT. I. PART I.

and in oppoſition to the dictates of his conſcience, to pronounce a capital ſentence againſt CHRIST. The divine Saviour behaved with inexpreſſible dignity under this heavy trial. As the end of his miſſion was to make expiation for the ſins of men, ſo when all things were ready, and when he had finiſhed the work of his glorious miniſtry, he placidly ſubmitted to the death of the croſs, and, with a ſerene and voluntary reſignation, committed his ſpirit into the hands of the Father.

His reſurrection.

X. After JESUS had remained three days in the ſepulchre, he reſumed that life which he had voluntarily laid down; and, riſing from the dead, declared to the univerſe, by that triumphant act, that the divine juſtice was ſatisfied, and the paths of ſalvation and immortality rendered acceſſible to the human race. He converſed with his diſciples during forty days after his reſurrection, and employed that time in inſtructing them more fully concerning the nature of his kingdom. Many wiſe and important reaſons prevented his ſhewing himſelf publicly at *Jeruſalem*, to confound the malignity and unbelief of his enemies. He contented himſelf with manifeſting the certainty of his glorious reſurrection, to a ſufficient number of faithful and credible witneſſes; foreſeeing, perhaps, that if he appeared in public, thoſe malicious unbelievers, who had formerly attributed his miracles to the power of magic, would now repreſent his reſurrection, as a phantom, or viſion, produced by the influence of infernal powers. After having remained upon earth during the ſpace of time above mentioned, and given to his diſciples a divine commiſſion to preach the glad tidings of ſalvation and immortality to the human race, he aſcended into heaven, in their preſence, and reſumed the enjoyment of that glory which he was poſſeſſed of before the worlds were created.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

*Concerning the proſperous events that happened to the church during this century.*

CENT. I. PART I.

I. JESUS, being aſcended into heaven, ſoon ſhewed his afflicted diſciples, that, though inviſible to mortal eyes, he was ſtill their omnipotent protector and their benevolent guide. About fifty days after his departure from them, he gave them the firſt proof of that majeſty and power to which he was exalted, by the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon them according to his promiſe [*p*]. The conſequences of this grand event were ſurpriſing and glorious, infinitely honourable to the Chriſtian religion and the divine miſſion of its triumphant author. For no ſooner had the apoſtles received this precious gift, this celeſtial guide, than their ignorance was turned into light, their doubts into certainty, their fears into a firm and invincible fortitude, and their former backwardneſs into an ardent and inextinguiſhable zeal, which led them to undertake their ſacred office with the utmoſt intrepidity and alacrity of mind. This marvellous event was attended with a variety of gifts; particularly the gift of tongues, ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to qualify the apoſtles to preach the goſpel to the different nations. Theſe holy apoſtles were alſo filled with a perfect perſuaſion, founded on CHRIST's expreſs promiſe, that the divine preſence would perpetually accompany them, and ſhew itſelf by miraculous interpoſitions, as often as the ſucceſs of their miniſtry ſhould render this neceſſary.

The apoſtles filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

II. Relying upon theſe celeſtial ſuccours, the apoſtles began their glorious miniſtry, by preaching the goſpel, according to CHRIST's poſitive

Preach the goſpel firſt to the Jews and Samaritans.

[*p*] Acts ii. 1, &c.

command,

CENT. I. PART I.

command, firſt to the Jews, and by endeavouring to bring that deluded people to the knowledge of the truth [*q*]. Nor were their labours unſucceſsful, ſince, in a very ſhort time, many thouſands were converted, by the influence of their miniſtry, to the Chriſtian faith [*r*]. From the Jews they paſſed to the Samaritans, to whom they preached with ſuch efficacy, that great numbers of that nation acknowledged the MESSIAH [*s*]. And, after that they had exerciſed their miniſtry, during ſeveral years, at *Jeruſalem*, and brought to a ſufficient degree of conſiſtence and maturity the Chriſtian churches which were founded in *Paleſtine* and the adjacent countries, they extended their views further, carried the divine lamp of the goſpel to all the nations of the world, and ſaw their labours crowned, almoſt every where, with the moſt abundant fruits.

The election of a new apoſtle.

III. No ſooner was CHRIST exalted on high, than the apoſtles determined to render their number complete, as it had been fixed by their divine maſter, and accordingly to chuſe, in the place of JUDAS, who had deſperately periſhed by his own hands, a man endowed with ſuch degrees of ſanctity and wiſdom, as were neceſſary in a ſtation of ſuch vaſt importance. Having therefore gathered together the ſmall aſſembly of Chriſtians which had then been formed at *Jeruſalem*, two men, remarkable for their piety and faith, were propoſed as the moſt worthy to ſtand candidates for this ſacred office. Theſe men were MATTHIAS and BARNABAS, the former of whom was, either by lot (which is the moſt general opinion), or by a plurality of voices of the aſſembly there preſent, choſen to the dignity of an apoſtle [*t*].

[*q*] Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8. xiii. 46. [*r*] Acts ii. 41. iv. 4. [*s*] Acts i. 8. viii. 14. [*t*] Acts i. 26.

IV.

IV. All theſe apoſtles were men without education, and abſolutely ignorant of letters and philoſophy; and yet in the infancy of the Chriſtian church, it was neceſſary that there ſhould be, at leaſt, ſome one defender of the goſpel, who, verſed in the learned arts, might be able to combat the Jewiſh doctors and the Pagan philoſophers with their own arms. For this purpoſe, JESUS himſelf, by an extraordinary voice from heaven, called to his ſervice a thirteenth apoſtle, whoſe name was SAUL (afterwards PAUL), and whoſe acquaintance both with Jewiſh and Grecian learning was very conſiderable [*u*]. This extraordinary man, who had been one of the moſt virulent enemies of the Chriſtians, became their moſt glorious and triumphant defender. Independent of the miraculous gifts with which he was enriched, he was naturally poſſeſſed of an invincible courage, an amazing force of genius, and a ſpirit of patience, which no fatigue could overcome, and which no ſufferings or trials could exhauſt. To theſe the cauſe of the goſpel, under the divine appointment, owed a conſiderable part of its rapid progreſs and ſurpriſing ſucceſs, as the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and the *Epiſtles of St.* PAUL, abundantly teſtify.

Paul called to be an apoſtle.

V. The firſt Chriſtian church, founded by the apoſtles, was that of *Jeruſalem*, which was the model of all thoſe that were afterwards erected during this firſt century. This church was, however, governed by the apoſtles themſelves, to whom both the *elders*, and thoſe who were entruſted with the care of the poor, even the *deacons*, were ſubject. The people, though they had not abandoned the Jewiſh worſhip, held, however, ſeparate aſſemblies, in which they were inſtructed by the apoſtles and elders, prayed together, celebrated the holy ſupper in remembrance of CHRIST,

The church of *Jeruſalem*, how conſtituted.

[*u*] Acts ix. 1.

of

CENT. I. PART I.

of his death and ſufferings, and the ſalvation offered to mankind through him; and, at the concluſion of theſe meetings, they teſtified their mutual love, partly by their liberality to the poor, and partly by ſober and friendly repaſts [*w*], which from thence were called *feaſts of charity*. Among the virtues which diſtinguiſhed the riſing church in this its infancy, that of charity to the poor and needy ſhone in the firſt rank, and with the brighteſt luſtre. The rich ſupplied the wants of their indigent brethren with ſuch liberality and readineſs, that, as St. LUKE tells us, among the primitive diſciples of CHRIST, all things were *in common* [*x*]. This expreſſion has, however, been greatly abuſed, and has been made to ſignify a *community of rights, goods, or poſſeſſions*, than which interpretation nothing is more groundleſs, nothing more falſe. For from a multitude of reaſons, as well as from the expreſs words of St. PETER [*y*], it is abundantly manifeſt that the community, which is implied in mutual *uſe* and mutual liberality, is the only thing intended in this paſſage [*z*].

Many churches founded by the apoſtles in different places.

VI. The apoſtles, having finiſhed their work at *Jeruſalem*, went from thence to employ their labours in other nations, travelled, with this view, over a great part of the known world, and in a ſhort time planted a vaſt number of churches among the Gentiles. Several of theſe are mentioned in the ſacred writings, particularly in the

[*w*] Acts ii. 42. [*x*] Acts ii. 44. iv. 32.
[*y*] Acts v. iv.
☞ [*z*] This is proved with the utmoſt evidence by Dr. MOSHEIM, in a diſſertation concerning the true nature of that community of goods, which is ſaid to have taken place in the church of *Jeruſalem*. This learned diſcourſe is to be found in the ſecond volume of our author's incomparable work, entitled, *Diſſertationes ad Hiſtoriam Eccleſiaſticam pertinentes*.

*Acts*

*Acts of the Apoſtles* [a]; though theſe are, undoubtedly, but a ſmall part of the churches, which were founded either by the apoſtles themſelves, or by their diſciples under their immediate direction. The diſtance of time, and the want of records, leave us at a loſs with reſpect to many intereſting circumſtances of the peregrinations of the apoſtles; nor have we any certain or preciſe accounts of the limits of their voyages, of the particular countries where they ſojourned, nor of the times and places in which they finiſhed their glorious courſe. The ſtories that are told concerning their arrival and exploits among the Gauls, the Engliſh, the Spaniards, the Germans, the Americans, the Chineſe, the Indians, and the Ruſſians, are too romantic in their nature, and of too recent a date, to be received by an impartial enquirer after truth. The greateſt part of theſe fables were forged after the time of CHARLEMAGNE, when moſt of the Chriſtian churches contended about the antiquity of their origin, with as much vehemence as the Arcadians, Egyptians, and Greeks, diſputed formerly about their ſeniority and precedence.

CHRIST reſpected among the Gentiles.

VII. At the ſame time, the beauty and excellence of the Chriſtian religion excited the admiration of the thinking part of mankind, wherever the apoſtles directed their courſe. Many, who were not willing to adopt the whole of its doctrines, were, nevertheleſs, as appears from undoubted records, ſo ſtruck with the account of CHRIST's life and actions, and ſo charmed with the ſublime purity of his precepts, that they ranked him in the number of the greateſt heroes,

[a] The names of the churches, planted by the apoſtles in the different nations, are ſpecified in a work of PHIL. JAMES HARTMAN, *De rebus geſtis Chriſtianorum ſub apoſtolis*, cap. vii. p. 107; and alſo in that of P. ALBERT FABRICIUS, entitled, *Lux Evangelii toti orbi exoriens*, cap. v. p. 83, &c.

nay, even of the gods themſelves. Great numbers kept, with the utmoſt care, in their houſes, pictures or images of the divine Saviour and his apoſtles, which they treated with the higheſt marks of veneration and reſpect [*b*]. And ſo illuſtrious was the fame of CHRIST's power grown, after his reſurrection from the dead, and the miraculous gifts ſhed from on high upon his apoſtles, that the emperor TIBERIUS is ſaid to have propoſed his being enrolled among the gods of *Rome*, which the oppoſition of the ſenate hindered from taking effect. Many have doubted of the truth of this ſtory: there are, however, ſeveral authors of the firſt note who have declared, that the reaſons alleged for the truth of this fact are ſuch as have removed their doubts, and appeared to them ſatisfactory and concluſive [*c*].

VIII.

[*b*] This is particularly mentioned by EUSEBIUS *Hiſt. Eccl.* lib. vii. cap. xviii. p. 265. and by IRENÆUS, lib. i. c. xxv.

[*c*] See THEOD. HASÆUS, *De decreto Tiberii, quo Chriſtum referre voluit in numerum Deorum*; as alſo a very learned letter written, in defence of the truth of this fact, by the celebrated CHRISTOPHER ISELIUS, and publiſhed in the *Bibliotheque Germanique*, tom. xxxii. p. 147. and tom. xxxiii. p. 12. [We may add to this note of Dr. MOSHEIM, that the late learned profeſſor Altmann publiſhed at *Bern*, in the year 1755, an ingenious pamphlet upon this ſubject, entitled *Diſquiſitio Hiſtorico-critica de Epiſtola* Pontii Pilati *ad* Tiberium, *qua* CHRISTI *miracula, mors, et reſurrectio recenſebantur*. This author makes it appear, that though the letter, which ſome have attributed to PILATE, and which is extant in ſeveral authors, be manifeſtly ſpurious, yet it is no leſs certain, that PILATE ſent to TIBERIUS an account of the death and reſurrection of CHRIST. See the *Biblioth. des ſciences et des beaux arts*, publiſhed at the *Hague*, tom. vi. p. 360. This matter has been examined anew with his uſual diligence and accuracy by the learned Dr. LARDNER, in the third volume of his *Collection of Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies to the truth of the Chriſtian Religion*, &c. p. 310, &c. He thinks that the teſtimonies of JUSTIN MARTYR and TERTULLIAN, who, in apologies for Chriſtianity, that were preſented, or at leaſt addreſſed to the emperor and ſenate of *Rome*, or to magiſtrates of high authority in the empire, affirm, that PILATE ſent to TIBERIUS an account of the death

The cauſes of the rapid propagation of the goſpel.

VIII. When we conſider the rapid progreſs of Chriſtianity among the Gentile nations, and the poor and feeble inſtruments by which this great and amazing event was immediately effected, we muſt naturally have recourſe to an omnipotent and inviſible hand, as its true and proper cauſe. For unleſs we ſuppoſe here a divine interpoſition, how was it poſſible that men, deſtitute of all human aid, without credit or riches, learning or eloquence, could, in ſo ſhort a time, perſuade a conſiderable part of mankind to abandon the religion of their anceſtors? How was it poſſible, that an handful of apoſtles, who, as fiſhermen and publicans, muſt have been contemned by their own nation, and as Jews, muſt have been odious to all others, could engage the learned and the mighty, as well as the ſimple and thoſe of low degree, to forſake their favourite prejudices, and to embrace a new religion which was an enemy to their corrupt paſſions? And, indeed, there were undoubtedly marks of a celeſtial power perpetually attending their miniſtry. There was, in their very language, an incredible energy, an amazing power of ſending light into the underſtanding, and conviction into the heart. To this were added, the commanding influence of ſtupendous miracles, the foretelling of future events, the power of diſcerning the ſecret thoughts and intentions of the heart, a magnanimity ſuperior to all difficulties, a contempt of riches and honours, a ſerene tranquillity in the face of death, and an invincible patience under torments ſtill more dreadful than death itſelf; and all this accompanied with lives free from all ſtain, and

death and reſurrection of CHRIST, deſerve ſome regard; though ſome writers, and particularly OROSIUS, have made alterations and additions in the original narration of TERTULLIAN, that are too much adapted to diminiſh the credibility of the whole.]

CENT. I. PART I.

adorned with the conſtant practice of ſublime virtue. Thus were the Meſſengers of the divine Saviour, the heralds of his ſpiritual and immortal kingdom, furniſhed for their glorious work, as the unanimous voice of ancient hiſtory ſo loudly teſtifies. The event ſufficiently declares this; for without theſe remarkable and extraordinary circumſtances, no rational account can be given of the rapid propagation of the goſpel throughout the world.

Miraculous gifts communicated by the apoſtles.

IX. What indeed contributed ſtill further to this glorious event, was, the power veſted in the apoſtles of tranſmitting to their diſciples theſe miraculous gifts. For many of the firſt Chriſtians were no ſooner baptized according to CHRIST's appointment, and dedicated to the ſervice of God by ſolemn prayer, and the impoſition of hands, than they ſpoke languages they had never known or learned before; foretold future events, healed the ſick by pronouncing the name of JESUS, reſtored the dead to life, and performed many things above the reach of human power [*d*]. And it is no wonder if men, who had the power of communicating to others theſe marvellous gifts, appeared great and reſpectable, wherever they exerciſed their glorious miniſtry.

The progreſs of the goſpel attributed to abſurd cauſes.

X. Such then were the true cauſes of that amazing rapidity with which the Chriſtian religion ſpread itſelf upon earth; and thoſe who pretend to aſſign other reaſons of this ſurpriſing event, indulge themſelves in idle fictions, which muſt diſguſt every attentive obſerver of men and things. In vain, therefore, have ſome imagined, that the extraordinary liberality of the Chriſtians to their poor, was a temptation to the more indolent and corrupt part of the multitude to em-

[*d*] See PFANNER's learned treatiſe, *De chariſmatibus ſive donis miraculoſis antiquæ eccleſiæ*, publiſhed at *Francfort*, 1683.

brace

brace the goſpel. Such malignant and ſuperficial reaſoners do not conſider, that thoſe who embraced this divine religion expoſed their lives to the moſt imminent danger; nor have they attention enough to recollect, that neither lazy nor vicious members were ſuffered to remain in the ſociety of Chriſtians. Equally vain is the invention of thoſe, who imagine that the profligate lives of the Heathen prieſts was an occaſion of the converſion of many to Chriſtianity. For, though this might indeed give them a diſguſt at the religion of theſe unworthy miniſters, yet it could not, alone, attach them to that of JESUS, which offered them from the world no other proſpects, than thoſe of poverty, infamy, and death. The perſon, who could embrace the goſpel, ſolely, from the motive now mentioned, muſt have reaſoned in this ſenſeleſs and extravagant manner: "The miniſters of that religion which I have "profeſſed from my infancy, lead profligate "lives: therefore, I will become a Chriſtian, "join myſelf to that body of men who are con"demned by the laws of the ſtate, and thus ex"poſe my life and fortune to the moſt imminent "danger."

## CHAP. V.

### *Concerning the calamitous events that happened to the church.*

I. THE innocence and virtue that diſtinguiſhed ſo eminently the lives of CHRIST's ſervants, and the ſpotleſs purity of the doctrine they taught, were not ſufficient to defend them againſt the virulence and malignity of the Jews. The prieſts and rulers of that abandoned people, not only loaded with injuries and reproach the apoſtles of

The Jews perſecute the Chriſtians in *Paleſtine.*

CENT. I. PART I.

JESUS, and their disciples, but condemned as many of them, as they could, to death, and executed in the most irregular and barbarous manner their sanguinary decrees. The murder of STEPHEN, of JAMES the son of ZEBEDEE, and of JAMES, surnamed the *Just*, bishop of *Jerusalem*, furnish dreadful examples of the truth of what we here advance [*e*]. This odious malignity of the Jewish doctors, against the heralds of the gospel, was undoubtedly owing to a secret apprehension, that the progress of Christianity would destroy the credit of Judaism, and bring on the ruin of their pompous ceremonies.

And also by those in foreign countries.

II. The Jews who lived out of *Palestine*, in the Roman provinces, did not yield to those of *Jerusalem* in point of cruelty to the innocent disciples of CHRIST. We learn from the history of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and other records of unquestionable authority, that they spared no labour, but zealously seized every occasion of animating the magistrates against the Christians, and setting on the multitude to demand their destruction. The high-priest of the nation, and the Jews, who dwelt in *Palestine*, were instrumental in exciting the rage of these foreign Jews against the infant church, by sending messengers to exhort them not only to avoid all intercourse with the Christians, but also to persecute them in the most vehement manner [*f*]. For this inhuman order, they endeavoured to find out the most plausible pretexts; and, therefore, they gave out, that the Christians were enemies to the Roman emperor,

[*e*] The martyrdom of STEPHEN is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, vii. 55.; and that of JAMES the son of ZEBEDEE, Acts xii. 1. 2; that of JAMES the *Just*, bishop of *Jerusalem*, is mentioned by JOSEPHUS, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, book xx. ch. viii. and by EUSEBIUS, in his *Eccles. History*, book ii. chap. xxiii.

[*f*] See the Dialogue of JUSTIN MARTYR with TRYPHO the Jew, p. 51, 52, 53. 109. 138. 318.

since

ſince they acknowledged the authority of a certain perſon whoſe name was JESUS, whom PILATE had puniſhed capitally as a malefactor by a moſt righteous ſentence, and on whom, nevertheleſs, they conferred the royal dignity. Theſe perfidious inſinuations had the intended effect, and the rage of the Jews againſt the Chriſtians was conveyed from father to ſon, from age to age; ſo that the church of CHRIST had, in no period of time, more bitter and deſperate enemies than that very people, to whom the immortal Saviour was more eſpecially ſent.

The Jews ſeverely puniſhed for their treatment of CHRIST and his diſciples.

III. The Supreme Judge of the world did not let the barbarous conduct of this perfidious nation go unpuniſhed. The moſt ſignal marks of divine juſtice purſued them, and the cruelties they had exerciſed upon CHRIST, and his diſciples, were dreadfully avenged. The God, who had for ſo many ages protected the Jews with an outſtretched arm, withdrew his aid. He permitted *Jeruſalem*, with its famous temple, to be deſtroyed by VESPASIAN and his ſon TITUS, an innumerable multitude of this devoted people to periſh by the ſword, and the greateſt part of thoſe that remained to groan under the yoke of a ſevere bondage. Nothing can be more affecting than the account of this terrible event, and the circumſtantial deſcription of the tremendous calamities which attended it, as they are given by JOSEPHUS, himſelf a Jew, and alſo a ſpectator of this horrid ſcene. From this period the Jews experienced, in every place, the hatred and contempt of the Gentile nations, ſtill more than they had formerly done. And in theſe their calamities the predictions of Chriſt were amply fulfilled, and his divine miſſion further illuſtrated.

The ten Gentile perſecutions.

IV. However virulent the Jews were againſt the Chriſtians, yet, upon many occaſions, they wanted power to execute their cruel purpoſes.

CENT. I. PART I.

This was not the caſe with the Heathen nations; and therefore from them the Chriſtians ſuffered the ſevereſt calamities. The Romans are ſaid to have purſued the Chriſtians with the utmoſt violence, in ten perſecutions [*g*], but this number is not verified by the ancient hiſtory of the church. For if, by theſe perſecutions, ſuch only are meant as were ſingularly ſevere and univerſal throughout the empire, then it is certain, that theſe amount not to the number above mentioned. And, if we take the provincial and leſs remarkable perſecutions into the account, they far exceed it. In the fifth century, certain Chriſtians were led by ſome paſſages of the holy ſcriptures, and by one eſpecially in the *Revelations* [*h*], to imagine that the church was to ſuffer ten calamities of a moſt grievous nature. To this notion, therefore, they endeavoured, though not all in the ſame way, to accommodate the language of hiſtory, even againſt the teſtimony of thoſe ancient records, from whence alone hiſtory can ſpeak with authority [*i*].

Laws made againſt the Chriſtians.

V. NERO was the firſt emperor who enacted laws againſt the Chriſtians. In this he was followed by DOMITIAN, MARCUS ANTONINUS the philoſopher, SEVERUS, and the other emperors, who indulged the prejudices they had imbibed againſt the diſciples of JESUS. All the edicts of theſe different princes were not, however, equally unjuſt, nor made with the ſame views, and for the ſame reaſons. Were they now extant, as they were collected by the celebrated lawyer DOMITIUS, in his book concerning the *duty of a Proconſul*, they

[*g*] The learned J. ALBERT FABRICIUS has given us a liſt of the authors that have written concerning theſe perſecutions, in his *Lux Evangelii orbi univerſo exoriens*, cap. vii. p. 133.

[*h*] Revel. xvii. 14.

[*i*] See SULPITIUS SEVERUS, book ii. ch. xxxiii. As alſo AUSTIN, *De civitate Dei*, book xviii. ch. lii.

would

would undoubtedly caſt a great light upon the hiſtory of the church, under the perſecuting emperors [*k*]. At preſent we muſt, in many caſes, be ſatisfied with probable conjectures for want of more certain evidence.

The cauſes of the perſecution of the Chriſtians by the Romans.

VI. Before we proceed further in this part of our hiſtory, a very natural curioſity calls us to enquire, how it happened, that the Romans, who were troubleſome to no nation on account of their religion, and who ſuffered even the Jews to live under their own laws, and follow their own method of worſhip, treated the Chriſtians alone with ſuch ſeverity? This important queſtion ſeems ſtill more difficult to be ſolved, when we conſider that the excellent nature of the Chriſtian religion, and its admirable tendency to promote both the public welfare of the ſtate, and the private felicity of the individual, entitled it, in a ſingular manner, to the favour and protection of the reigning powers. One of the principal reaſons of the ſeverity, with which the Romans perſecuted the Chriſtians, notwithſtanding theſe conſiderations, ſeems to have been the abhorrence and contempt with which the latter regarded the religion of the empire, which was ſo intimately connected with the form, and, indeed, with the very eſſence of its political conſtitution. For, though the Romans gave an unlimited toleration to all religions, which had nothing in their tenets dangerous to the commonwealth, yet they would not permit that of their anceſtors, which was eſtabliſhed by the laws of the ſtate, to be turned into deriſion, nor the

[*k*] The Collection of the imperial edicts againſt the Chriſtians, made by DOMITIUS, and now loſt, is mentioned by LACTANTIUS, in his *Divine Inſtitutes*, book v. chap. xi. Such of theſe edicts, as have eſcaped the ruins of time, are learnedly illuſtrated by FRANC. BALDUINUS, in a ſmall treatiſe, entitled, *Commentarium ad edicta veterum principum Romanorum de Chriſtianis*. Of which a ſecond edition was publiſhed by MR. GUNDLING, at *Hall*, 1727.

people

people to be drawn away from their attachment to it. Theſe, however, were the two things which the Chriſtians were charged with, and that juſtly, though to their honour. They dared to ridicule the abſurdities of the Pagan ſuperſtition, and they were ardent and aſſiduous in gaining proſelytes to the truth. Nor did they only attack the religion of *Rome*, but alſo all the different ſhapes and forms under which ſuperſtition appeared in the various countries where they exerciſed their miniſtry. From hence the Romans concluded, that the Chriſtian ſect was not only unſupportably daring and arrogant, but, moreover, an enemy to the public tranquillity, and every way proper to excite civil wars and commotions in the empire. It is, probably, on this account, that TACITUS reproaches them with the odious character of *haters of mankind* [*l*], and ſtyles the religion of JESUS a *deſtructive ſuperſtition*; and that SUETONIUS ſpeaks of the Chriſtians, and their doctrine, in terms of the ſame kind [*m*].

Other cauſes of theſe perſecutions.

VII. Another circumſtance that irritated the Romans againſt the Chriſtians, was the ſimplicity of their worſhip, which reſembled in nothing the ſacred rites of any other people. The Chriſtians had neither ſacrifices, nor temples, nor images, nor oracles, nor ſacerdotal orders; and this was ſufficient to bring upon them the reproaches of an ignorant multitude, who imagined that there

[*l*] *Annal.* lib. xv. cap. xliv.

[*m*] *In Nerone*, cap. xvi. Theſe odious epithets, which TACITUS gives to the Chriſtians and their religion, as likewiſe the language of SUETONIUS, who calls Chriſtianity a *poiſonous or malignant ſuperſtition (maleſica ſuperſtitio)*, are founded upon the ſame reaſons. A ſect, which not only could not endure, but even laboured to aboliſh, the religious ſyſtems of the Romans, and alſo thoſe of all the other nations of the univerſe, appeared to the ſhort-ſighted and ſuperficial obſervers of religious matters, as enemies of mankind, and perſons poſſeſſed with a mortal hatred of all the human race.

5 could

could be no religion without theſe. Thus they were looked upon as a ſort of Atheiſts; and, by the Roman laws, thoſe who were chargeable with Atheiſm were declared the peſts of human ſociety. But this was not all: the ſordid intereſts of a multitude of lazy and ſelfiſh prieſts were immediately connected with the ruin and oppreſſion of the Chriſtian cauſe. The public worſhip of ſuch an immenſe number of deities was a ſource of ſubſiſtence, and even of riches, to the whole rabble of prieſts and augurs, and alſo to a multitude of merchants and artiſts. And as the progreſs of the goſpel threatened the ruin of this religious traffic, and the profits it produced, this raiſed up new enemies to the Chriſtians, and armed the rage of mercenary ſuperſtition againſt their lives and their cauſe [*n*]. CENT. I. PART I.

VIII. To accompliſh more ſpeedily the ruin of the Chriſtians, thoſe, whoſe intereſts were incompatible with the progreſs of the goſpel, loaded them with the moſt opprobrious calumnies, which were too eaſily received as truth, by the credulous and unthinking multitude, among whom they were diſperſed with the utmoſt induſtry. We find a large account of theſe perfidious and ill-grounded reproaches in the writings of the firſt defenders of the Chriſtian cauſe [*o*]. And theſe, The moſt odious calumnies ſpread abroad againſt the Chriſtians.

[*n*] This obſervation is verified by the ſtory of DEMETRIUS the ſilver-ſmith, Acts xix. 25. and by the following paſſage in the 97th letter of the Xth book of PLINY's epiſtles: "The "temples, which were *almoſt deſerted*, begin to be frequented "again; and the ſacred rites, which have been long neglected, are again performed.—The victims, which have "had hitherto *few purchaſers*, begin to come again to the "market," &c.

[*o*] See the laborious work of CHRIST. KORTHOLT, entitled, *Paganus obtrectator, ſeu de calumniis Gentilium in Chriſtianos*; to which may be added, JO. JAC. HULDRICUS, *De calumniis Gentilium in Chriſtianos*, publiſhed at *Zurich*, in 8vo. in the year 1744.

indeed,

CENT. I. PART I.

indeed, were the only arms they had to oppoſe the truth; ſince the excellence of the goſpel, and the virtue of its miniſters and followers, left its enemies no reſources but calumny and perſecution. Nothing can be imagined, in point of virulence and fury, that they did not employ for the ruin of the Chriſtians. They even went ſo far as to perſuade the multitude, that all the calamities, wars, tempeſts, and diſeaſes, that afflicted mankind, were judgments ſent down by the angry gods, becauſe the Chriſtians, who contemned their authority, were ſuffered in the empire [*p*].

The puniſhments and judicial forms uſed againſt the Chriſtians.

IX. The various kinds of puniſhments, both capital and corrective, which were employed againſt the Chriſtians, are particularly deſcribed by learned men who have written profeſſedly upon that ſubject [*q*]. The forms of proceeding, uſed in their condemnation, may be ſeen in the *Acts of the Martyrs*, in the letters of PLINY and TRAJAN, and other ancient monuments [*r*]. Theſe judicial forms were very different, at different times, and changed naturally according to the mildneſs or ſeverity of the laws enacted by the different emperors againſt the Chriſtians. Thus, at one time, we ſee the moſt diligent ſearch made after the followers of CHRIST; at another, all perquiſition ſuſpended, and poſitive accuſation and information only allowed. Under one reign we ſee them, upon their being proved Chriſtians, or their confeſſing themſelves ſuch, immediately dragged away to execution, unleſs they prevent their puniſhment by apoſtaſy; under another, we

[*p*] See ARNOBIUS *Contra gentes*.

[*q*] See for this purpoſe ANT. GALLONIUS and GASP. SAGITTARIUS, *De cruciatibus martyrum*.

[*r*] See BOHMER, *Juris Eccleſ. Proteſtant.* tom. iv. lib. v. *Decretal.* tit. 1. § 32. p. 617.

ſee

ſee inhuman magiſtrates endeavouring to compel them, by all ſorts of tortures, to renounce their profeſſion.

Martyrs and confeſſors.

X. They who, in the perilous times of the church, fell by the hand of bloody perſecution, and expired in the cauſe of the divine Saviour, were called *martyrs*; a term borrowed from the ſacred writings, which ſignifies *witneſſes*, and thus expreſſes the glorious teſtimony which theſe magnanimous believers bore to the truth. The title of *confeſſors* was given to ſuch, as, in the face of death, and at the expence of honours, fortune, and all the other advantages of the world, had confeſſed with fortitude, before the Roman tribunals, their firm attachment to the religion of JESUS. The veneration that was paid to both *martyrs* and *confeſſors* is hardly credible. The diſtinguiſhing honours and privileges they enjoyed, the authority with which their counſels and deciſions were attended, would furniſh ample matter for a hiſtory apart; and ſuch an undertaking might be highly uſeful in many reſpects. There was, no doubt, as much wiſdom as juſtice in treating with ſuch reſpect, and inveſting with ſuch privileges, theſe Chriſtian heroes; ſince nothing was more adapted to encourage others to ſuffer with cheerfulneſs in the cauſe of CHRIST. But, as the beſt and wiſeſt inſtitutions are generally perverted, by the weakneſs or corruption of men, from their original purpoſe; ſo the authority and privileges granted, in the beginning, to martyrs and confeſſors, became, in proceſs of time, a ſupport to ſuperſtition, an incentive to enthuſiaſm, and a ſource of innumerable evils and abuſes.

Their number.

XI. The firſt three or four ages of the church were ſtained with the blood of martyrs, who ſuffered for the name of JESUS. The greatneſs of their number is acknowledged by all, who have a competent acquaintance with ancient hiſtory, and who

CENT. I. PART I.

who have examined that matter with any degree of impartiality. It is true, the learned DODWELL has endeavoured to invalidate this unanimous decision of the ancient historians [s], and to diminish considerably the number of those that suffered death for the gospel. And after him, several writers have maintained his opinion, and asserted, that whatever may have been the calamities that the Christians, in general, suffered for their attachment to the gospel, very few were put to death on that account. This hypothesis has been warmly opposed, as derogating from that divine power which enabled Christians to be faithful even unto death, and a contrary one embraced, which augments prodigiously the number of these heroic sufferers. Here, no doubt, it will be wise to avoid both these extremes, and to hold the middle path, which certainly leads nearest to the truth. The martyrs were less in number than several of the ancient and modern writers have supposed them to be; but much more numerous than DODWELL and his followers are willing to believe. And this medium will be easily admitted by such, as have learned from the ancient writers, that, in the darkest and most calamitous times of the church, all Christians were not equally nor promiscuously disturbed, nor called before the public tribunals. Those who were of the lowest rank of the people, escaped the best; their obscurity, in some measure, screened them from the fury of persecution. The learned and eloquent, the doctors and ministers; and chiefly the rich, after the confiscation of whose fortunes a rapacious magistracy were perpetually gaping, these were the persons the most exposed to the dangers of the times.

[s] See DODWELL's dissertation, *De paucitate martyrum*, in his *Dissertationes Cyprianicæ*.

XII.

XII. The actions and ſayings of theſe holy martyrs, from the moment of their impriſonment to their laſt gaſp, were carefully recorded, in order to be read on certain days, and thus propoſed as models to future ages. But few, however, of theſe ancient acts are come down to our times [*t*]; the greateſt part of them having been deſtroyed during that dreadful perſecution which DIOCLETIAN carried on ten years, with ſuch fury, againſt the Chriſtians. For a moſt diligent ſearch was then made after all their books and papers; and all of them that were found were committed to the flames. From the eighth century downwards, ſeveral Greek and Latin writers endeavoured to make up this loſs, by compiling, with vaſt labour, accounts of the lives and actions of the ancient martyrs. But the moſt of them have given us little elſe than a ſeries of fables, adorned with profuſion of rhetorical flowers, and ſtriking images, as the wiſer, even among the Romiſh doctors, frankly acknowledge. Nor are thoſe records, that paſs under the name of *martyrology*, worthy of ſuperior credit, ſince they bear the moſt evident marks both of ignorance and falſehood. So that, upon the whole, this part of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, for want of ancient and authentic monuments, is extremely imperfect, and neceſſarily attended with much obſcurity.

Their lives and actions.

XIII. It would have been ſurpriſing, if, under ſuch a monſter of cruelty as NERO, the Chriſtians had enjoyed the ſweets of tranquillity and freedom. But this was far from being the caſe; for this perfidious tyrant accuſed them of having ſet fire to the city of *Rome*, that horrid crime, which

The perſecution under Nero.

[*t*] Such of thoſe acts as are worthy of credit have been collected by the learned RUINARTUS, into one volume in folio, of a moderate ſize, entitled, *Selecta et ſincera martyrum acta*, Amſteled. 1713. The hypotheſis of DODWELL is amply refuted in a laboured preface which the author has prefixed to this work.

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CENT. I. PART I.

he himſelf had committed with a barbarous pleaſure. In avenging this crime upon the innocent Chriſtians, he ordered matters ſo, that the puniſhment ſhould bear ſome reſemblance to the offence. He, therefore, wrapped up ſome of them in combuſtible garments, and ordered fire to be ſet to them when the darkneſs came on, that thus, like torches, they might diſpel the obſcurity of the night; while others were faſtened to croſſes, or torn to pieces by wild beaſts, or put to death in ſome ſuch dreadful manner. This horrid perſecution was ſet on foot in the month of *November* [*u*], in the 64th year of CHRIST, and in it, according to ſome ancient accounts, St. PAUL and St. PETER ſuffered martyrdom; though this latter fact is conteſted by many, as being abſolutely irreconcileable with chronology [*w*]. The death of NERO, who periſhed miſerably in the year 68, put an end to the calamities of this firſt perſecution, under which, during the ſpace of four years, the Chriſtians ſuffered every ſort of torment and affliction, which the ingenious cruelty of their enemies could invent.

The extent of this perſecution.

XIV. Learned men are not entirely agreed concerning the extent of this perſecution under NERO. Some confine it to the city of *Rome*, while others repreſent it as having raged throughout the whole empire. The latter opinion, which is alſo the moſt ancient [*x*], is undoubtedly to be preferred; as

[*u*] See, for a further illuſtration of this point of chronology, two French diſſertations of the very learned ALPHONSE de VIGNOLES, concerning the cauſe and the commencement of the perſecution under NERO, which are printed in MASSON's *Hiſtoire critique de la republique des lettres*, tom. viii. p. 74—117. tom. ix. p. 172—186. See alſo TOINARD, *Ad Lactantium de mortibus perſequut.* p. 398.

[*w*] See TILLEMONT, *Hiſtoire des empereurs*, tom. i. p. 564. BARATIER, *De ſucceſſione Romanor. Pontif.* cap. v. p. 60.

[*x*] This opinion was firſt defended by FRANC. BALDWIN, in his *Comm. ad edicta imperator. in Chriſtianos*, p. 27, 28. After

as it is certain, that the laws enacted againſt the Chriſtians, were enacted againſt the whole body, and not againſt particular churches, and were conſequently in force in the remoteſt provinces. The authority of TERTULLIAN confirms this, who tells us, that NERO and DOMITIAN had enacted laws againſt the Chriſtians, of which TRAJAN had, in part, taken away the force, and rendered them, in ſome meaſure, without effect [*y*]. We ſhall not have recourſe for a further confirmation of this opinion, to that famous Portugueſe or Spaniſh inſcription, in which NERO is praiſed for having *purged that province from the new ſuperſtition*; ſince that inſcription is juſtly ſuſpected to be a mere forgery, and the beſt Spaniſh authors conſider it as ſuch [*z*]. But we may, however, make one obſervation, which will tend to illuſtrate the point in queſtion, and that is, that, ſince the Chriſtians were condemned by NERO, not ſo much on ac-

After him LAUNOIUS maintained the ſame opinion in his *Diſſert. quâ Sulpitii Severi locus de prima martyrum Galliæ epocha vindicatur*, § 1. *p.* 139, 140. tom. ii. part I. *opp.* This opinion, however, is ſtill more acutely and learnedly defended by DODWELL, in the xi^th^ of his *Diſſertationes Cyprianicæ*.

[*y*] *Apologet.* cap. iv. p. 46. according to the edition of HAVERCAMP.

[*z*] This celebrated inſcription is publiſhed by the learned GRUTERUS, in the firſt volume of his inſcriptions, p. ccxxxviii. n. 9. It muſt, however, be obſerved, that the beſt Spaniſh writers dare not venture to defend the genuineneſs and authority of this inſcription, as it has not been ſeen by any of them, and was firſt produced by CYRIAC of ANCONA, a perſon univerſally known to be utterly unworthy of the leaſt credit. We ſhall add here the judgment which the excellent hiſtorian of Spain, JO. DE FERRERAS, has given of this inſcription, in his *Hiſtoire générale d'Eſpagne*, tom. i. p. 192. "Je ne puis "m'empêcher (ſays he) d'obſerver que Cyriac d'Ancone "fut le premier qui publia cette inſcription, et que c'eſt de lui "que les autres l'ont tirée: mais comme la foi de cet Ecri"vain eſt ſuſpect au jugement de tous les ſavans, que d'ail"leurs il n'y a ni veſtige, ni ſouvenir, de cette inſcription dans "les places où l'on dit qu'elle s'eſt trouvée, et qu'on ne ſçait "où la prendre à preſent, chacun peut en porter le jugement "qu'il voudra."

CENT. I. PART I.

count of their religion, as for the falſely-imputed crime of burning the city [*a*], it is ſcarcely to be imagined, that he would leave unmoleſted, even beyond the bounds of *Rome*, a ſect whoſe members were accuſed of ſuch an abominable deed.

The perſecution under Domitian.

XV. Though, immediately after the death of NERO, the rage of this firſt perſecution againſt the Chriſtians ceaſed, yet the flame broke out a-new in the year ninety-three or ninety-four, under DOMITIAN, a prince little inferior to NERO in all ſorts of wickedneſs [*b*]. This perſecution was occaſioned, if we may give credit to HEGESIPPUS, by the fears that DOMITIAN was under of loſing the empire [*c*]; for he had been informed, that, among the relations of CHRIST, a man ſhould ariſe, who, poſſeſſed of a turbulent and ambitious ſpirit, was to excite commotions in the ſtate, and aim at ſupreme dominion. However that may have been, the perſecution renewed by this unworthy prince was extremely violent, though his untimely death put a ſtop to it not long after it commenced. FLAVIUS CLEMENS, a man of conſular dignity, and FLAVIA DOMITILLA his niece, or, as ſome ſay, his wife, were the principal martyrs that ſuffered in this perſecution, in which alſo the apoſtle JOHN was baniſhed to the iſle of *Patmos*. TERTULLIAN and other writers inform us, that, before his baniſhment, he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, from whence he came forth not only living, but even unhurt. This ſtory, however, is not atteſted in ſuch a manner, as to leave no remaining doubt about its certainty [*d*].

[*a*] See THEOD. RUINART. *Præf. ad acta martyrum ſincera et ſelecta*, f. 31, &c.

[*b*] Idem, *Præf. ad acta martyrum*, &c. f. 33. THOM. ITTIGIUS, *Sclectis Hiſtor. Eccl. Capit.* Sæc. i. cap. vi. § 11. p. 331.

[*c*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xix, xx.

[*d*] See MOSHEIM's *Syntagma diſſert. ad hiſtoriam eccleſ. pertinentium*, p. 497—546.

# PART II.

## The INTERNAL HISTORY of the CHURCH.

## CHAPTER I.

*Containing an account of the ſtate of* LEARNING *and* PHILOSOPHY.



I. IF we had any certain or ſatisfactory account of the doctrines, which were received among the wiſer of the eaſtern nations, when the light of the goſpel firſt roſe upon the world, this would contribute to illuſtrate many important points in the ancient hiſtory of the church. But the caſe is quite otherwiſe: the fragments of the ancient oriental philoſophy that are come down to us, are, as every one knows, few in number; and ſuch as they are, they yet require the diligence, erudition, and ſagacity of ſome learned man, to collect them into a body, to arrange them with method, and to explain them with perſpicuity [*e*].

The ſtate of philoſophy in the eaſt not ſufficiently known.

II. The doctrine of the *magi*, who believed the univerſe to be governed by *two principles*, the one good, and the other evil, flouriſhed in *Perſia*. Their followers, however, were not all agreed concern-

The philoſophy of the Perſians, Chaldæans, and Arabians.

[*e*] The hiſtory of the oriental philoſophy by Mr. STANLEY, though it is not void of all kind of merit, is yet extremely defective. That learned author is ſo far from having exhauſted his ſubject, that he has left it, on the contrary, in many places wholly untouched. The hiſtory of philoſophy, publiſhed in Germany, by the very learned Mr. BRUCKER, is vaſtly preferable to Mr. STANLEY's work; and the German author, indeed, much ſuperior to the Engliſh one, both in point of genius and of erudition.

CENT. I. PART II.

ing the nature of theſe principles [*f*]; but this did not prevent the propagation of the main doctrine, which was received throughout a conſiderable part of *Aſia* and *Africa*, eſpecially among the Chaldæans, Aſſyrians, Syrians, and Egyptians, though with different modifications, and had even infected the Jews themſelves [*g*]. The Arabians at that time, and even afterwards, were more remarkable for ſtrength and courage than for genius and ſagacity; nor do they ſeem, according to their own confeſſion [*h*], to have acquired any great reputation for wiſdom and philoſophy before the time of MAHOMET.

The wiſdom of the Indians and Egyptians.

III. From the earlieſt times the Indians were diſtinguiſhed by their taſte for ſublime knowledge and wiſdom. We might, perhaps, be able to form a judgment of their philoſophical tenets, if that moſt ancient book, which they looked upon as particularly ſacred, and which they call *veda*, or the law, were brought to light and tranſlated into ſome known language. But the accounts which are given of this remarkable book, by thoſe who have been in the *Indies*, are ſo various and irreconcileable with each other, that we muſt yet wait for further ſatisfaction on this head [*i*]. As to the Egyptians, they were divided,

[*f*] See HYDE's *Hiſtory of the religion of the ancient Perſians*, a work full of erudition and diſorder, and interſperſed with conjectures of the moſt improbable kind.

[*g*] See a treatiſe of Jo. CHRISTOPH. WOLF, publiſhed at *Hamburg*, in 1707, under the title of *Manichæiſmus ante Manichæos*. See alſo MOSHEIM's *Obſervations upon* CUDWORTH's *Intellectual Syſtem of the Univerſe*, p. 328. 423.

[*h*] See ABULPHARAIUS, *De Moribus Arabum*, publiſhed by POCOCK.

[*i*] I have lately heard that this moſt important, and long-expected book has been acquired by ſome French Jeſuits, who are miſſionaries in the Indies, and who have ſent it over to the King of France's library. It is alſo ſaid, that it is already tranſlated, or will be ſo immediately. See *Lettre du P. Calmette*

divided, as every one knows, into a multitude of ſects and opinions [*k*]; ſo that their labour ſeems exceeding fruitleſs, who endeavour to reduce the philoſophy of this people to one ſyſtem.

The oriental philoſophy, properly ſo called.

IV. But of all the different ſyſtems of philoſophy that were received in *Aſia* and *Africa* about the time of our Saviour, none was ſo detrimental to the Chriſtian religion, as that which was ſtyled *gnoſis*, or ſcience, i. e. *the way to the true knowledge of the deity*, and which we have above called the *oriental doctrine*, in order to diſtinguiſh it from the Grecian philoſophy. It was from the boſom of this pretended oriental wiſdom, that the chiefs of thoſe ſects, which in the three firſt centuries perplexed and afflicted the Chriſtian church, originally iſſued forth. Theſe ſupercilious doctors, endeavouring to accommodate to the tenets of their fantaſtic philoſophy, the pure, the ſimple, and ſublime doctrines of the Son of God, brought forth, as the reſult of this jarring compoſition, a multitude of idle dreams and fictions, and impoſed upon their followers a ſyſtem of opinions, which were partly ludicrous, and partly perplexed with intricate ſubtilties, and covered over with impenetrable obſcurity. The ancient doctors, both Greek and Latin, who oppoſed theſe ſects, conſidered them as ſo many branches that derived their origin from the Platonic philoſophy. But this was pure illuſion: an apparent reſemblance between certain opinions of PLATO, and ſome of the tenets of the eaſtern ſchools, deceived theſe good men, who had no knowledge but of the Grecian philoſophy, and were abſolutely ignorant of the oriental doctrines. Whoever com-

*Calmette à M. de Cartigny, dans les Lettres edifiantes et curieuſes des Miſſions Etrangeres*, xxi. *Recueil*, p. 455. as alſo *Recueil* xxiii. p. 161.

[*k*] See MOSHEIM's *Obſervations on the Intellectual Syſtem*, &c. in his Latin tranſlation of that work, tom. i. p. 415.

pares the platonic and gnoſtic philoſophy together, will eaſily perceive the wide difference that there is between them.

The firſt principles of this philoſophy.

V. The firſt principles of the oriental philoſophy ſeem perfectly conſiſtent with the dictates of reaſon; for its firſt founder muſt undoubtedly have argued in the following manner: "There "are many evils in this world, and men ſeem "impelled by a natural inſtinct to the practice of "thoſe things which reaſon condemns; but that "eternal mind, from which all ſpirits derive "their exiſtence, muſt be inacceſſible to all kinds "of evil, and alſo of a moſt perfect and benefi-"cent nature; therefore the origin of thoſe evils, "with which the univerſe abounds, muſt be "ſought ſomewhere elſe than in the Deity. It "cannot reſide in him who is all perfection; and "therefore it muſt be *without* him. Now, there "is nothing *without* or *beyond* the Deity, but "*matter*; therefore *matter* is the centre and "ſource of all evil, of all vice." Having taken for granted theſe principles, they proceeded further, and affirmed, that matter was eternal, and derived its preſent form, not from the will of the Supreme God, but from the creating power of ſome inferior intelligence, to whom the world and its inhabitants owed their exiſtence. As a proof of this aſſertion, they alleged that it was incredible, that the Supreme Deity, perfectly good, and infinitely removed from all evil, ſhould either create or modify matter, which is eſſentially malignant and corrupt, or beſtow upon it, in any degree, the riches of his wiſdom and liberality. They were, however, aware of the inſuperable difficulties that lay againſt their ſyſtem; for when they were called to explain, in an accurate and ſatisfactory manner, how this rude and corrupt matter came to be arranged into ſuch a regular and harmonious frame as that

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of the univerſe, and, particularly, how celeſtial ſpirits were joined to bodies formed out of its malignant maſs, they were ſadly embarraſſed, and found that the plaineſt dictates of reaſon declared their ſyſtem incapable of defence. In this perplexity, they had recourſe to wild fictions and romantic fables, in order to give an account of the formation of the world, and the origin of mankind.

The oriental philoſophers divided in their ſentiments.

VI. Thoſe who, by mere dint of fancy and invention, endeavour to caſt a light upon obſcure points, or to ſolve great and intricate difficulties, are ſeldom agreed about the methods of proceeding; and, by a neceſſary conſequence, ſeparate into different ſects. Such was the caſe of the oriental philoſophers, when they ſet themſelves to explain the difficulties mentioned above. Some imagined *two eternal principles* from whence all things proceeded, the one preſiding over *light*, and the other over *matter*, and by their perpetual conflict, explained the mixture of good and evil, that appears in the univerſe. Others maintained, that the being, which preſided over matter, was not an eternal principle, but a ſubordinate intelligence, one of thoſe whom the Supreme God produced from himſelf. They ſuppoſed that this being was moved, by a ſudden impulſe, to reduce to order the rude maſs of matter, which lay excluded from the manſions of the Deity, and alſo to create the human race. A third ſort fell upon a ſyſtem different from the two preceding, and formed to themſelves the notion of a *triumvirate* of beings, in which the *Supreme Deity* was diſtinguiſhed both from the *material, evil principle*, and from the *creator* of this ſublunary world. Theſe, then, were the three leading ſects of the oriental philoſophy, which were ſubdivided into various factions, by the diſputes that aroſe, when they came to explain more fully their re-

ſpective opinions, and to purſue them into all their monſtrous conſequences. Theſe multiplied diviſions were the natural and neceſſary conſequences of a ſyſtem which had no ſolid foundation, and was no more, indeed, than an airy phantom, blown up by the wanton fancies of ſelf-ſufficient men.' And that theſe diviſions did really ſubſiſt, the hiſtory of the Chriſtian ſects, that embraced this philoſophy, abundantly teſtifies.

Their opinions concerning the deity.

VII. It is, however, to be obſerved, that, as all theſe ſects were founded upon one common principle, their diviſions did not prevent their holding, in common, certain opinions concerning the deity, the univerſe, the human race, and ſeveral other ſubjects. They were all, therefore, unanimous in acknowledging the exiſtence of an eternal nature, in whom dwelt the fulneſs of wiſdom, goodneſs, and all other perfections, and of whom no mortal was able to form a complete idea. This great being was conſidered by them as a moſt pure and radiant *light*, diffuſed through the immenſity of ſpace, which they called *pleroma*, a Greek word, which ſignifies fulneſs; and they taught concerning him, and his operations, the following things: "The *eternal nature*, infinitely "perfect and infinitely happy, having dwelt "from everlaſting in a profound ſolitude, and in "a bleſſed tranquillity, produced, at length, "from *itſelf*, two minds of a different ſex, which "reſembled their ſupreme parent in the moſt "perfect manner. From the prolific union of "theſe two beings others aroſe, which were alſo "followed by ſucceeding generations; ſo that, "in proceſs of time, a celeſtial family was formed "in the *pleroma* [*l*]. This divine progeny, being "immu-

☞ [*l*] It appears highly probable, that the apoſtle PAUL had an eye to this fantaſtic mythology, when, in the firſt chapter of his *Firſt Epiſtle to Timothy*, ver. 4. he exhorts him not

" immutable in its nature, and above the power " of mortality, was called, by the philoſophers, " *æon* [*m*]," a term which ſignifies, in the Greek language, an eternal nature. How many in number theſe *æons* were, was a point much controverted among the oriental ſages.



not to *give heed to fables and endleſs* GENEALOGIES; *which miniſter queſtions*, &c.

☞ [*m*] The word αἰὼν, or *æon*, is commonly uſed by the Greek writers, but in different ſenſes. Its ſignification in the Gnoſtic ſyſtem is not extremely evident, and ſeveral learned men have deſpaired of finding out its true meaning. Αἰὼν, or *æon*, among the ancients, was uſed to ſignify the age of man, or the duration of human life. In after-times it was employed by philoſophers to expreſs the duration of ſpiritual and inviſible beings. Theſe philoſophers uſed the word χρόνος, as the meaſure of corporeal and changing objects; and αἰὼν, as the meaſure of ſuch as were immutable and eternal. And as God is the chief of thoſe immutable beings which are ſpiritual, and conſequently not to be perceived by our outward ſenſes, his infinite and eternal duration was expreſſed by the term αἰὼν, or *æon*, and that is the ſenſe in which that word is now commonly underſtood. It was, however, afterwards attributed to other ſpiritual and inviſible beings; and the oriental philoſophers, who lived about the time of CHRIST's appearance upon earth, and made uſe of the Greek language, underſtood by it the *duration* of eternal and immutable things, the *ſpace* or period of time, in which they exiſt. Nor did the variations, through which this word paſſed, end here; from expreſſing only the *duration* of beings, it was by a *metonomy* employed to ſignify the beings themſelves. Thus the Supreme Being was called αἰὼν, or *æon*; and the angels diſtinguiſhed alſo by the title of *æons*. All this will lead us to the true meaning of that word among the Gnoſtics. They had formed to themſelves the notion of an inviſible and ſpiritual world, compoſed of *entities* or *virtues*, proceeding from the Supreme Being, and ſucceeding each other at certain intervals of time, ſo as to form an *eternal chain*, of which our world was the terminating link; a notion of eternity very different from that of the Platoniſts, who repreſented it as ſtable, permanent, and void of ſucceſſion. To the beings that formed this eternal chain, the Gnoſtics aſſigned a certain term of duration and a certain ſphere of action. Their *terms of duration* were, at firſt, called, αἰῶνες, and they themſelves were afterwards *metonymically* diſtinguiſhed by that title.

VIII.

CENT. I. PART II.

Concerning the origin of this world.

VIII. "Beyond the manſions of *light*, where "dwells the *deity* with his celeſtial offſpring, "there lies a rude and unwieldy maſs of *matter*, "agitated by innate, turbulent, and irregular "motions. One of the celeſtial natures deſcend- "ing from the *pleroma*, either by a fortuitous "impulſe, or in conſequence of a divine com- "miſſion, reduced to order this unſeemly maſs, "adorned it with a rich variety of gifts, created "men, and inferior animals of different kinds, to "ſtore it with inhabitants, and corrected its ma- "lignity by mixing with it a certain portion of "light, and alſo of a matter celeſtial and di- "vine. This creator of the world is diſtinguiſhed "from the Supreme Deity by the name of *de- "miurge*. His character is a compound of "ſhining qualities, and inſupportable arrogance; "and his exceſſive luſt of empire effaces his "talents and his virtues. He claims dominion "over the new world he has formed, as his "ſovereign right; and, excluding totally the "ſupreme deity from all concernment in it, he "demands from mankind, for himſelf and his "aſſociates, divine honours."

Concerning the ſtate and deſtination of human ſouls.

IX. "Man is a compound of a terreſtrial "and corrupt body, and a ſoul which is of "celeſtial origin, and, in ſome meaſure, an "emanation from the divinity. This nobler "part is miſerably weighed down and encum- "bered by the body, which is the ſeat of all "irregular luſts and impure deſires. It is this "body that ſeduces the ſoul from the purſuit of "truth, and not only turns it from the contem- "plation and worſhip of the Supreme Being, ſo "as to confine its homage and veneration to the "creator of this world, but alſo attaches it to "terreſtrial objects, and to the immoderate pur- "ſuit of ſenſual pleaſures, by which its nature "is totally polluted. The ſovereign mind em-

"ploys

"ploys various means to deliver his offspring "from this deplorable ſervitude, eſpecially the "miniſtry of divine meſſengers, whom he ſends "to enlighten, to admoniſh, and to reform the "human race. In the mean time, the impe- "rious *demiurge* exerts his power in oppoſition to "the merciful purpoſe of the Supreme Being, "reſiſts the influence of thoſe ſolemn invitations "by which he exhorts mankind to return to him, "and labours to efface the knowledge of God in "the minds of intelligent beings. In this con- "flict, ſuch ſouls, as, throwing off the yoke of "the creators and rulers of this world, riſe to "their Supreme Parent, and ſubdue the turbu- "lent and ſinful motions, which corrupt *matter* "excites within them, ſhall, at the diſſolution "of their mortal bodies, aſcend directly to the "*pleroma*. Thoſe, on the contrary, who remain "in the bondage of ſervile ſuperſtition, and cor- "rupt matter, ſhall, at the end of this life, paſs "into new bodies, until they awake from their "ſinful lethargy. In the end, however, the "Supreme God ſhall come forth victorious, tri- "umph over all oppoſition, and, having deli- "vered from their ſervitude the greateſt part of "thoſe ſouls that are impriſoned in mortal "bodies, ſhall diſſolve the frame of this viſible "world, and involve it in a general ruin. After "this ſolemn period, primitive tranquillity ſhall "be reſtored in the univerſe, and God ſhall reign "with happy ſpirits, in undiſturbed felicity, "through the everlaſting ages."

Of the Jewiſh philoſophy.

X. Such were the principal tenets of the oriental philoſophy. The ſtate of letters and philoſophy among the Jews comes next under conſideration; and of this we may form ſome idea from what has been ſaid already concerning that nation. It is chiefly to be obſerved, that the dark

dark and hidden ſcience, which they called the *kabbala*, was at this time taught and inculcated by many among that ſuperſtitious people [*n*]. This ſcience, in many things, bears a ſtrong reſemblance to the oriental philoſophy; or, to ſpeak more accurately, it is indeed that ſame philoſophy accommodated to the Jewiſh religion, and tempered with a certain mixture of truth. Nor were the doctrines of the Grecian ſages unknown to the Jews at the period now before us; ſince, from the time of ALEXANDER the GREAT, ſome of them had been admitted, even into the Moſaic religion. We ſhall ſay nothing concerning the opinions which they adopted from the philoſophical and theological ſyſtems of the Chaldæans, Egyptians, and Syrians [*o*].

The ſtate of learning in *Greece*.

XI. The Greeks, in the opinion of moſt writers, were yet in poſſeſſion of the firſt rank among the nations that cultivated letters and philoſophy. In many places, and eſpecially at *Athens*, there were a conſiderable number of men diſtinguiſhed by their learning, acuteneſs, and eloquence; philoſophers of all ſects, who taught the doctrines of PLATO, ARISTOTLE, ZENO, and EPICURUS; rhetoricians alſo and men of genius, who inſtructed the youth in the rules of eloquence, and formed their taſte for the liberal arts. So that thoſe who had a paſſion for the ſtudy of oratory, reſorted in multitudes to the Grecian ſchools, in order to perfect themſelves in that noble ſcience. *Alexandria*, in *Egypt*, was alſo

[*n*] See Jo. FRANC. BUDDEI *Introductio in Hiſtoriam Philoſ. Hebræorum*; and alſo the authors which B. WOLF mentions, with encomiums, in his *Bibliotheca Hebraica*, tom. iii.

[*o*] See Jo. FRANC. BUDDEI *Introductio in Hiſtoriam Philoſ. Hebræorum*; as alſo the authors recommended by WOLF in his *Bibliotheca Hebraica*, tom. iii.

much

much frequented for the ſame purpoſe, as a great number of the Grecian philoſophers and rhetoricians dwelt in that city.

At *Rome.*

XII. The Romans alſo, at this time, made a ſhining figure among the poliſhed and learned nations. All the ſciences flouriſhed at *Rome*. The youth of a higher rank were early inſtructed in the Greek language and eloquence. From thence they proceeded to the ſtudy of philoſophy, and the laws of their country; and they finiſhed their education by a voyage into *Greece*, where they not only gave the laſt degree of perfection to their philoſophical ſtudies, but alſo acquired that refined wit and elegance of taſte, that ſerved to ſet off their more ſolid attainments in the moſt advantageous manner [*p*]. None of the philoſophical ſects were more in vogue among the Romans than the Epicureans and the Academics, which were peculiarly favoured by the great, who, ſoothed by their doctrines into a falſe ſecurity, indulged their paſſions without remorſe, and continued in their vicious purſuits without terror. During the reign of AUGUSTUS, the culture of polite learning and of the fine arts was held in great honour, and thoſe that contributed with zeal and ſucceſs to this, were eminently diſtinguiſhed by that prince. But after his death, learning languiſhed without encouragement, and was neglected, becauſe the ſucceeding emperors were more intent upon the arts of war and rapine, than thoſe more amiable arts and inventions that are the fruits of leiſure and peace.

In the other nations.

XIII. With reſpect to the other nations, ſuch as the Germans, Celts, and Bretons, it is certain, that they were not deſtitute of learned and inge-

[*p*] See PAGANANI GAUDENTII *Liber de Philoſophiæ apud Romanos initio et progreſſu, in* TERTIO FASCICULO *Novæ Collectionis Variorum Scriptorum.* Halæ, 1717.

nious men. Among the Gauls, the people of *Marſeilles* had long acquired a ſhining reputation for their progreſs in the ſciences [*q*]; and there is no doubt, but that the neighbouring countries received the benefit of their inſtructions. Among the Celts, their druids, prieſts, philoſophers, and legiſlators were highly remarkable for their wiſdom; but their writings, at leaſt ſuch as are yet extant, are not ſufficient to inform us of the nature of their philoſophy [*r*]. The Romans, indeed, introduced letters and philoſophy into all the provinces which ſubmitted to their victorious arms, in order to ſoften the rough manners of the ſavage nations, and form in them, imperceptibly, the ſentiments and feelings of humanity [*s*].

## CHAP. II.

### *Concerning the Doctors and Miniſters of the Church, and its form of government.*

The neceſſity of public teachers.

I. THE great end of CHRIST's miſſion was to form an univerſal church, gathered out of all the nations of the world, and to extend the limits of this great ſociety from age to age. But in order to this, it was neceſſary, firſt, to appoint *extraordinary teachers*, who, converting the Jews and Gentiles to the truth, ſhould erect, every where, Chriſtian aſſemblies; and then, to eſtabliſh *ordinary miniſters*, and interpreters of the

[*q*] See the *Hiſtoire Literaire de la France par des Religieux Benedictins*. Diſſert. Prelim. p. 42, &c.

[*r*] JAC. MARTIN, *Religion des Gaulois*, livr. i. cap. xxi. p. 175.

[*s*] JUVENAL, Satir. xv. ver. 110.

"Nunc totus Graias noſtraſque habet orbis Athenas,
"Gallia Cauſſidicos docuit facunda Britannos,
"De conducendo loquitur jam Rhetore Thule."

divine

divine will, who ſhould enforce and repeat the doctrines delivered by the former, and maintain the people in their holy profeſſion, and in the practice of the Chriſtian virtues. For the beſt ſyſtem of religion muſt neceſſarily either dwindle to nothing, or be egregiouſly corrupted, if it is not perpetually inculcated and explained by a regular and ſtanding miniſtry.

Extraordinary teachers.

II. The *extraordinary* teachers, whom CHRIST employed to lay the foundations of his everlaſting kingdom, were the XII apoſtles, and the LXX diſciples, of whom mention has been made above. To theſe the Evangeliſts are to be added, by which title thoſe were diſtinguiſhed whom the apoſtles ſent to inſtruct the nations, or who, of their own accord, abandoned every worldly attachment, and conſecrated themſelves to the ſacred office of propagating the goſpel [*t*]. In this rank, alſo, we muſt place thoſe, to whom, in the infancy of the church, the marvellous power of ſpeaking in foreign languages which they had never learned, was communicated from above. For the perſon to whom the divine omnipotence and liberality had imparted the gift of tongues, might conclude, with the utmoſt aſſurance, from the gift itſelf, (which a wiſe being would not beſtow in vain,) that he was appointed by God to miniſter unto the truth, and to employ his talents in the ſervice of Chriſtianity [*u*].

The authority of the apoſtles.

III. Many have undertaken to write the hiſtory of the apoſtles [*w*], a hiſtory, which we find loaded with fables, doubts, and difficulties, when

[*t*] See St. PAUL's *Epiſtle to the Epheſians*, iv. 11. As alſo EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. xxxvii.

[*u*] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

[*w*] The authors who have written concerning the apoſtles, are enumerated by SAGITTARIUS in his *Introduction to Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, ch. i. p. 2. and alſo by BUDDÆUS, in his treatiſe, *De Eccleſia Apoſtolica*, p. 674.

CENT. I. PART II.

we purſue it further than the books of the New Teſtament, and the moſt ancient writers in the Chriſtian church. In order to have a juſt idea of the nature, privileges, and authority of the apoſtolic function, we muſt conſider an apoſtle as a perſon who was honoured with a divine commiſſion, inveſted with the power of *making laws*, of *controlling and reſtraining the wicked*, when that was expedient, and of *working miracles*, when neceſſary; and ſent to mankind, *to unfold to them the divine will, to open to them the paths of ſalvation and immortality, and to ſeparate from the multitude, and unite in the bonds of one ſacred ſociety, thoſe who were attentive and obedient to the voice of God addreſſed to men by their miniſtry* [x].

The LXX diſciples.

IV. The accounts we have of the LXX diſciples are ſtill more obſcure than thoſe of the apoſtles; ſince the former are only once mentioned in the New Teſtament (Luke x. 1). The illuſtrations that we have yet remaining, relative to their character and office, are certainly compoſed by the more modern Greeks, and, therefore, can have but little authority or credit [y]. Their commiſſion extended no further than the Jewiſh nations as appears from the expreſs words of St. LUKE; though it is highly probable, that, after CHRIST's aſcenſion, they performed the function of Evangeliſts, and declared the glad tidings of ſalvation, and

[x] See FRED. SPANHEIM, *De apoſtolis et apoſtolatu*, tom. ii. *opp.* p. 289. It is not without weighty reaſons, and without having conſidered the matter attentively, that I have ſuppoſed the apoſtles inveſted with the power of *enacting laws*. I am ſenſible that ſome very learned men among the moderns have denied this power, but I apprehend they differ from me rather in words than in any thing elſe.

[y] Theſe accounts are to be ſeen at the end of three books, concerning the life and death of MOSES, which were diſcovered and illuſtrated by GILB. GAULMINUS, and republiſhed by JO. ALBERT FABRICIUS, in his *Biblioth. Græc.* p. 474.

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the means of obtaining it, through different nations and provinces.

V. Neither CHRIST himself, nor his holy apoſtles, have commanded any thing clearly or expreſsly concerning the external form of the church, and the preciſe method, according to which it ſhould be governed [z]. From this we may

The external form of the church not determined by CHRIST.

☞ [z] Thoſe who imagine that CHRIST himſelf, or the apoſtles by his direction and authority, appointed a certain fixed form of church-government, are not agreed what that form was. The principal opinions that have been adopted upon this head may be reduced to the four following: The *firſt* is, that of the Roman Catholics, who maintain, "That "CHRIST's intention and appointment was, that his follow-"ers ſhould be collected into one ſacred empire, ſubjected to "the government of St PETER and his ſucceſſors, and divid-"ed, like the kingdoms of this world, into ſeveral provinces; "that, in conſequence thereof, PETER fixed the ſeat of "eccleſiaſtical dominion at *Rome*, but afterwards, to alleviate "the burthen of his office, divided the church into three "greater provinces, according to the diviſion of the world at "that time, and appointed a perſon to preſide in each, who "was dignified with the title of *patriarch*; that the European "patriarch reſided at *Rome*, the Aſiatic at *Antioch*, and the "African at *Alexandria*; that the biſhops of each province, "among whom alſo there were various ranks, were to re-"verence the authority of their reſpective patriarchs, and "that both biſhops and patriarchs were to be paſſively ſub-"ject to the ſupreme dominion of the Roman pontiff *." This romantic account ſcarcely deſerves a ſerious refutation. The *ſecond* opinion, concerning the government of the church, makes no mention of a *ſupreme head*, or of *patriarchs*, conſtituted by divine authority, but ſuppoſes that the apoſtles divided the Roman empire into as many eccleſiaſtical provinces as there were ſecular, or civil ones; that the *metropolitan* biſhop, *i. e.* the prelate, who reſided in the capital city of each province, preſided over the clergy of that province, and that the other biſhops were ſubject to his authority. This opinion has been adopted by ſome of the moſt learned of the Romiſh church †, and has alſo been

* See LEON ALLATIUS, *De perpetua concenſ. Eccleſ. Orient. et Occident.* lib. i. cap. ii. MORINUS, *Exercitat. Eccleſiaſt* lib. i *Exer.* i.

† PETRUS DE MARCA, *De concord. ſacerdot. et imperii*, lib. vi. cap. i. MORINUS, *Exerc. Eccl.* lib. i. *Ex.* xviii. PAGI *Critica in annal. Baronii ad A.* xxxvii. tom. i. p. 29.

CENT. I. PART II.

may infer, that the regulation of this was, in ſome meaſure, to be accommodated to the time, and

favoured by ſome of the moſt eminent Britiſh divines ‡. Some Proteſtant writers of note have endeavoured to prove that it is not ſupported by ſufficient evidence §. The *third* opinion is, that of thoſe who acknowledge, that, when the Chriſtians began to multiply exceedingly, *metropolitans*, *patriarchs*, and *archbiſhops* were, indeed, created, but only by *human* appointment and authority; though they confeſs, at the ſame time, that it is conſonant to the orders and intention of CHRIST and his apoſtles, that, in every Chriſtian church, there ſhould be one perſon inveſted with the higheſt authority, and clothed with certain rights and privileges above the other doctors of that aſſembly. This opinion has been embraced by many Engliſh divines of the firſt rank in the learned world, and alſo by many in other countries and communions. The *fourth* and laſt opinion is, that of the Preſbyterians, who affirm that CHRIST's intention was, that the Chriſtian doctors and miniſters ſhould all enjoy the ſame rank and authority, without any ſort of pre-eminence or ſubordination, any diſtinction of rights and privileges. The reader will find an ample account of theſe *four* different opinions with reſpect to church-government in Dr. MOSHEIM's *Larger hiſtory of the firſt century*. This learned and impartial writer, who condemns with reaſon the *fourth* opinion, as it is explained by thoſe bigoted Puritans, who look upon all ſubordination, and variety of rank among the doctors of the church, as condemnable and anti-chriſtian, obſerves, however, with equal reaſon, that this opinion may be explained and modified ſo, as to reconcile the moderate abettors of the epiſcopal diſcipline with the leſs rigid Preſbyterians. The opinion modified by Dr. MOSHEIM amounts to this: "That the Chriſtian doctors are "*equal* in this ſenſe; that CHRIST has left no poſitive and "ſpecial decree which conſtitutes a diſtinction among them, "nor any *divine* commandment by which thoſe who, in conſequence of the appointments of human wiſdom, are in the "higher ranks, can demand, by a divine right, the obedience "and ſubmiſſion of the inferior doctors, &c. their abſtaining "from the exerciſe of certain functions," &c.

The truth of the matter is, that CHRIST, by leaving this matter undetermined, has, of conſequence, left Chriſtian ſocieties a diſcretionary power of modelling the government of

‡ HAMMOND, *Diſſ. de Epiſcop.* BEVEREGE, *Cod. Canon. Vet. Eccleſ. Vindic.* lib. ii. cap. v. tom. ii. *Patr. Apoſt.* USSER, *De Origine Epiſcop. et Metropol.* p. 20.

§ BASNAGE, *Hiſt. de l'Egliſe*, tom. i. livr. i. cap. viii. BOEHMER. *Annot. ad Petrum de Marca de concordia ſacerd. et imperii*, p. 143.

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and left to the wiſdom and prudence of the chief rulers, both of the ſtate and of the church. If, however, it is true, that the apoſtles acted by divine inſpiration, and in conformity with the commands of their bleſſed Maſter (and this no Chriſtian can call in queſtion), then it follows, that that form of government which the primitive churches borrowed from that of *Jeruſalem*, the firſt Chriſtian aſſembly eſtabliſhed by the apoſtles themſelves, muſt be eſteemed as of divine inſtitution. But from this it would be wrong to conclude that ſuch a form is immutable, and ought to be invariably obſerved; for this a great variety of events may render impoſſible. In thoſe early times, every Chriſtian church conſiſted of the *people*, their *leaders*, and the *miniſters*, or *deacons*, and theſe, indeed, belong eſſentially to every religious ſociety. The people were, undoubtedly, the firſt in authority; for the apoſtles ſhewed, by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the conſent of the aſſembly [*a*], and ſuch a method of proceeding was both prudent and neceſſary in thoſe critical times.

The form of the firſt church at *Jeruſalem*.

VI. It was, therefore, the aſſembly of the people, which choſe their own rulers and teachers, or received them, by a free and authoritative conſent, when recommended by others. The ſame people rejected or confirmed, by their ſuffrages, the laws, that were propoſed by their rulers to the aſſembly; excommunicated profligate and unworthy members of the church, reſtored the penitent to their forfeited privileges,

The rights of the people.

the church in ſuch a manner, as the circumſtantial reaſons of times, places, &c. may require; and therefore the wiſeſt government of the church, is the beſt and the moſt divine; and every Chriſtian ſociety has a right to make laws for itſelf, provided that theſe laws are conſiſtent with charity and peace, and with the fundamental doctrines and principles of Chriſtianity.

[*a*] Acts i. 15. vi. 3. xv. 4. xxi. 22.

CENT. I. PART II.

passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and dissension, that arose in their community, examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons; and, in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power.

Their oblations.

The people, indeed, had, in some measure, purchased these privileges by administering to the support of their rulers, ministers, and poor, and by offering large and generous contributions, when the safety or interests of the community rendered them necessary. In these supplies each one bore a part proportioned to his circumstances; and the various gifts which were thus brought into the public assemblies, were called *oblations*.

A perfect equality among the primitive Christians.

VII. There reigned among the members of the Christian church, however distinguished they were by worldly rank and titles, not only an amiable harmony, but also a perfect equality. This appeared by the *feasts of charity*, in which all were indiscriminately assembled; by the names of *brethren* and *sisters*, with which they mutually saluted each other; and by several circumstances of a like nature. Nor, in this first century, was the distinction made between Christians of a more or less perfect order, which took place afterwards. Whoever acknowledged CHRIST as the Saviour of mankind, and made a solemn profession of his confidence in him, was immediately baptized and received into the church. But, in process of time, when the church began to flourish, and its members to increase, it was thought prudent and necessary to divide Christians into two orders, distinguished by the names of *believers* and *catechumens*. The former were those, who had been solemnly admitted into the church by baptism, and in consequence thereof, were instructed in all the mysteries of religion,

Believers and catechumens.

had acceſs to all the parts of divine worſhip, and were authorized to vote in the eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies. The latter were ſuch, as had not yet been dedicated to God and CHRIST by baptiſm, and were, therefore, admitted neither to the public prayers, nor to the holy communion, nor to the eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies.

The rulers of the church.

VIII. The rulers of the church were called either *preſbyters* [*b*], or *biſhops*, which two titles are, in the New Teſtament, undoubtedly applied to the ſame order of men [*c*]. Theſe were perſons of eminent gravity, and ſuch as had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their ſuperior ſanctity and merit [*d*]. Their particular functions were not always the ſame; for while ſome of them confined their labours to the inſtruction of the people, others contributed in different ways to the edification of the church. Hence the diſtinction between *teaching* and *ruling preſbyters* has been adopted by certain learned men. But, if ever this diſtinction exiſted, which I neither affirm nor deny, it certainly did not continue long; ſince it is manifeſt, that St. PAUL requires that all biſhops or preſbyters be qualified and ready to teach and inſtruct [*e*].

Preſbyters or biſhops.

The prophets.

IX. Among the firſt profeſſors of Chriſtianity, there were but few men of learning; few, who

☞ [*b*] The word *preſbyter*, or elder, is taken from the Jewiſh inſtitution, and ſignifies rather the venerable prudence and wiſdom of old age, than age itſelf.

[*c*] Acts xx. 17. 28. Phil. i. 1. Tit. i. 5. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 1.

[*d*] 1 Tim. iii. 1. Tit. i. 5.

[*e*] 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c. See, concerning the word *preſbyter*, the illuſtrations given by the learned VITRINGA, *De ſynagoga vetere*, lib. iii. part I. cap. i. p. 609; and by the venerable JO. BENED. CARPZOVIUS, in his *Exerc. in Epiſt. ad Hebræos ex Philone*, p. 499. As to the *preſbyters* themſelves, and the nature of their office, the reader will receive much ſatisfaction from the accounts that are given of that order by BUDÆUS, *De Eccleſia Apoſtolica*, cap. vi. p. 719. and by the moſt learned PFAFFIUS, *De originibus juris eccleſ.* p. 494.

CENT. I. PART II.

had capacity enough to inſinuate into the minds of a groſs and ignorant multitude, the knowledge of divine things. God therefore, in his infinite wiſdom, judged it neceſſary to raiſe up, in many churches, extraordinary teachers, who were to diſcourſe, in the public aſſemblies, upon the various points of the Chriſtian doctrine, and to treat with the people, in the name of God, as guided by his direction, and clothed with his authority. Such were the *Prophets of the New Teſtament* [*f*], an order of men, whoſe commiſſion is too much limited by the writers, who confine it to the interpretation of the books of the Old Teſtament, and eſpecially the Prophecies [*g*.] For it is certain, that they, who claimed the rank of *Prophets*, were inveſted with the power of cenſuring publicly ſuch as had been guilty of any irregularity. But, to prevent the abuſes, that deſigning men might make of this inſtitution, by pretending to this extraordinary character in order to execute unworthy ends, there were always preſent, in the public auditories, judges, divinely appointed, who, by certain and infallible marks, were able to diſtinguiſh the falſe prophets from the true. This order of *prophets* ceaſed, when the want of teachers, which gave riſe to it, was abundantly ſupplied.

Deacons of the church at *Jeruſalem.*

X. The church was, undoubtedly, provided from the beginning with inferior miniſters or *deacons*. No ſociety can be without its ſervants, and ſtill leſs ſuch ſocieties as thoſe of the firſt Chriſtians were. And it appears not only probable, but evident, that the *young men*, who car-

[*f*] Rom. xiii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 28. xiv. 3. 29. Eph. iv. 11.

[*g*] See MOSHEIM's diſſertation *De illis qui* PROPHETÆ *vocantur in Novo Fœdere*, which is to be found in the ſecond volume of his *Syntagma Diſſertationum ad Hiſtoriam Eccleſ. pertinentium*.

ried

ried away the dead bodies of ANANIAS and SAPPHIRA, were the ſubordinate miniſters, or *deacons*, of the church of *Jeruſalem*, who attended the apoſtles to execute their orders [*b*]. Theſe firſt

[*b*] Acts v. 6. 10.

Thoſe who may be ſurpriſed at my affirming, that the *young men*, mentioned in the paſſages here referred to, were the *deacons*, or miniſters of the church of *Jeruſalem*, are deſired to conſider, that the words νεώτεροι, νεανίσκοι, i. e. *young men*, are not always uſed to determine the age of the perſons to whom they are applied, but are frequently employed to point out their *offices*, or functions, both by the Greek and Latin writers. The ſame rule of interpretation, that diverſifies the ſenſe of the word *preſbyter* (which, as all know, ſignifies ſometimes the *age* of a perſon, and, at other times, his *function*), is manifeſtly applicable to the word before us. As, therefore, by the title of *preſbyters*, the heads or rulers of a ſociety are pointed out, without any regard to their age; ſo by the term *young men*, we are often to underſtand *miniſters* or *ſervants*, becauſe ſuch are generally in the flower of youth. This interpretation may be confirmed by examples, which are not wanting even in the New Teſtament. CHRIST himſelf ſeems to attribute this ſenſe, to the word νεώτερος, Luke xxii. 26. ὁ μείζων ἐν ὑμῖν, γ ἔσθω ὡ ὁ νεώτε ρ. Our Saviour explains the term μείζων, by the word ἡγούμενος, and it therefore ſignifies a *preſbyter*, or ruler: he alſo ſubſtitutes, a little after, ὁ διακονῶν, in the place of νεώτερος, which confirms our interpretation in the moſt unanſwerable manner. So that μείζων and νεώτερος are not here indications of certain ages, but of certain functions, and the precept of CHRIST amounts to this: "He that performs the office of a preſbyter or elder "among you, let him not think himſelf ſuperior to the "miniſters or deacons." The paſſage of 1 Pet. v. 5. is ſtill more expreſs to our purpoſe: Ομοίως νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις. It is evident from the preceding verſes, that *preſbyter* here is the name of an office, and points out a ruler or teacher of the church; and that the term νεώτερος is alſo to be interpreted, not *young men* in point of age, but the *miniſters*, or ſervants of the church. St. PETER, having ſolemnly exhorted the preſbyters, not to abuſe the power that was committed to them, addreſſes his diſcourſe to the miniſters, or *deacons* of the church: "But likewiſe, ye younger, i. e. mi-"niſters and deacons, deſpiſe not the orders of the preſbyters "or elders, but perform cheerfully whatſoever they command "you." In the ſame ſenſe, does St. LUKE employ this term, Acts v. 6. 10. and his νεώτεροι and νεανίσκοι are, un-

 doubtedly,

CENT. I. PART II.

first *deacons* of the church, being chosen from among the Jews, who were born in *Palestine*, were suspected by the foreign Jews of partiality in distributing the offerings, which were presented for the support of the poor [*i*]. To remedy, therefore, this disorder, seven other deacons were chosen, by order of the apostles, and employed in the service of that part of the church of *Jerusalem*, which was composed of the foreign Jews, converted to Christianity. Of these new ministers, six were foreigners, as appears by their names: the seventh was chosen out of the Proselytes, of whom there were a certain number among the first Christians at *Jerusalem*, and to whom it was reasonable, that some regard should be shewn, in the election of the deacons, as well as to the foreign Jews. All the other Christian churches followed the example of that of *Jerusalem*, in whatever related to the choice and office of the deacons. Some, particularly the eastern churches, elected *deaconesses*, and chose, for that purpose, matrons or widows of eminent sanctity, who also ministered to the necessities of the poor, and performed several other offices, that tended to the maintenance of order and decency in the church [*k*].

Bishops.

XI. Such was the constitution of the Christian church in its infancy, when its assemblies were

doubtedly, the deacons of the church of *Jerusalem*, of whom the Greek Jews complain afterwards to the apostles (Acts vi. 1, &c.) on account of the partial distribution of the alms. I might confirm this sense of the word *young men* by numberless citations from Greek and Roman writers, and a variety of authors sacred and profane; but this is not the proper place for demonstrations of this nature.

[*i*] Acts vi. 1, &c.

[*k*] For an ample account of the *deacons* and *deaconesses* of the primitive church, see ZEIGLER, *De diaconis et diaconissis*, cap. xix. p. 347. BASNAGII *Annal. Polit. Eccles. ad A.* xxxv. tom. i. p. 450. BINGHAM, *Orig. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. xx.

neither

neither numerous nor ſplendid. Three or four preſbyters, men of remarkable piety and wiſdom, ruled theſe ſmall congregations in perfect harmony, nor did they ſtand in need of any preſident or ſuperior to maintain concord and order where no diſſenſions were known. But the number of the preſbyters and deacons increaſing with that of the churches, and the ſacred work of the miniſtry growing more painful and weighty, by a number of additional duties, theſe new circumſtances required new regulations. It was then judged neceſſary, that one man of diſtinguiſhed gravity and wiſdom ſhould preſide in the council of preſbyters, in order to diſtribute among his colleagues their ſeveral taſks, and to be a center of union to the whole ſociety. This perſon was, at firſt, ſtyled the *angel* [*l*] of the church to which he belonged, but was afterward diſtinguiſhed by the name of *biſhop*, or inſpector; a name borrowed from the Greek language, and expreſſing the principal part of the epiſcopal function, which was to inſpect into, and ſuperintend, the affairs of the church. It is highly probable, that the church of *Jeruſalem*, grown conſiderably numerous and deprived of the miniſtry of the apoſtles, who were gone to inſtruct the other nations, was the firſt which choſe a preſident or biſhop. And it is no leſs probable, that the other churches followed by degrees ſuch a reſpectable example.

The nature of the epiſcopal dignity in this century.

XII. Let none, however, confound the biſhops of this primitive and golden period of the church with thoſe of whom we read in the following ages. For, though they were both diſtinguiſhed by the ſame name, yet they differed extremely, and that in many reſpects. A biſhop, during the firſt and ſecond century, was a perſon who had the care of

[*l*] Rev. ii. 3.

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CENT. I. PART II.

one Chriſtian aſſembly, which, at that time, was, generally ſpeaking, ſmall enough to be contained in a private houſe. In this aſſembly he acted not ſo much with the authority of a *maſter*, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful *ſervant*. He inſtructed the people, performed the ſeveral parts of divine worſhip, attended the ſick, and inſpected into the circumſtances and ſupplies of the poor. He charged, indeed, the preſbyters with the performance of thoſe duties and ſervices, which the multiplicity of his engagements rendered it impoſſible for him to fulfil; but had not the power to decide or enact any thing without the conſent of the preſbyters and people. And, though the epiſcopal office was both laborious and ſingularly dangerous, yet its revenues were extremely ſmall, ſince the church had no certain income, but depended on the gifts or *oblations* of the multitude, which were, no doubt, inconſiderable, and were moreover to be divided between the biſhops, preſbyters, deacons, and poor.

The origin of dioceſes and chorepiſcopi.

XIII. The power and juriſdiction of the biſhops were not long confined to theſe narrow limits, but ſoon extended themſelves, and that by the following means. The biſhops, who lived in the cities, had, either by their own miniſtry or that of their preſbyters, erected new churches in the neighbouring towns and villages. Theſe churches, continuing under the inſpection and miniſtry of the biſhops, by whoſe labours and counſels they had been engaged to embrace the goſpel, grew imperceptibly into eccleſiaſtical provinces, which the Greeks afterwards called *dioceſes*. But as the biſhop of the city could not extend his labours and inſpection to all theſe churches in the country and in the villages, ſo he appointed certain ſuffragans or deputies to govern and to inſtruct theſe new ſocieties; and they

they were distinguished by the title of *chorepiscopi*, i. e. country bishops. This order held the middle rank between bishops and presbyters, being inferior to the former, and superior to the latter.

Whether councils and metropolitans are to be placed in the first century.

XIV. The churches, in those early times, were entirely independent; none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own rulers and its own laws. For, though the churches founded by the apostles, had this particular deference shewn them, that they were consulted in difficult and doubtful cases; yet they had no juridical authority, no sort of supremacy over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. Nothing, on the contrary, is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive churches; nor does there even appear, in this first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial churches, from which *councils* and *metropolitans* derive their origin. It was only in the second century that the custom of holding councils commenced in *Greece*, from whence it soon spread through the other provinces [*m*].

The principal writers, the apostles and their disciples.

XV. The principal place among the Christian doctors, and among those also, who by their writings were instrumental in the progress of the truth, is due to the apostles and certain of their disciples, who were set apart and inspired by God, to record the actions of CHRIST and his apostles.

[*m*] The meeting of the church of *Jerusalem*, mentioned in the xvth chapter of the Acts, is commonly considered as the *first Christian council*. But this notion arises from a manifest abuse of the word *council*. That meeting was only of one church; and, if such a meeting be called a *council*, it will follow that there were innumerable councils in the primitive times. But every one knows, that a *council* is an assembly of deputies or commissioners sent from several churches associated by certain bonds in a general body, and therefore the supposition above mentioned falls to the ground.

The

CENT. I. PART II.

The writings of theſe holy men, which are comprehended in the books of the New Teſtament, are in the hands of all who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians. Thoſe who are deſirous of particular information with reſpect to the hiſtory of theſe ſacred books, and the arguments which prove their divine authority, their genuineneſs, and purity, muſt conſult the learned authors who have written profeſſedly upon that matter [*n*].

The time when the canon was fixed.

XVI. The opinions, or rather the conjectures, of the learned, concerning the time when the books of the New Teſtament were collected into one volume, as alſo about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. This important queſtion is attended with great and almoſt inſuperable difficulties to us in theſe latter times [*o*]. It is, however, ſufficient for us to know, that, before the middle of the ſecond century, the greateſt part of the books of the New Teſtament were read in every Chriſtian ſociety throughout the world, and received as a divine rule of faith and manners. Hence it appears, that theſe ſacred writings were carefully ſeparated from ſeveral human compoſitions upon the ſame ſubject, either by ſome of the apoſtles themſelves, who lived ſo long, or by their diſciples and ſucceſſors, who were ſpread abroad through all nations [*p*]. We are well aſſured [*q*], that the

[*n*] For the hiſtory of the books of the New Teſtament, ſee particularly Jo. ALB. FABRICIUS, *Biblioth. Græc.* lib. iv. cap. v. p. 122—227. The ſame learned author has given an accurate liſt of the writers, who have defended the divinity of theſe ſacred books, in his *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum pro verit. relig. Chriſtianæ*, cap. xxvi. p. 502.

[*o*] See Jo. ENS, *Bibliotheca S. ſeu Diatriba de librorum N. T. Canone*, publiſhed at *Amſterdam in* 1710; as alſo Jo. MILL. *Prolegomen. ad Nov. Teſt.* § 1. p. 23.

[*p*] See FRICKIUS, *De cura Veteris Eccleſiæ circa Canon.* cap. iii. p. 86.

[*q*] This is expreſsly affirmed by EUSEBIUS, in the xxivth chapter of the third book of his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*.

*four*

*four gospels* were collected during the life of St. JOHN, and that the three first received the approbation of this divine apostle. And why may we not suppose that the other books of the New Testament were gathered together at the same time?

Apocryphal and spurious writings.

XVII. What renders this highly probable is, that the most urgent necessity required its being done. For, not long after CHRIST's ascension into heaven, several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed, by persons whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Nor was this all: productions appeared which were imposed on the world by fraudulent men, as the writings of the holy apostles [*r*]. These apocryphal and spurious writings must have produced a sad confusion, and rendered both the history and the doctrine of CHRIST uncertain, had not the rulers of the church used all possible care and diligence in separating the books that were truly apostolical and divine from all that spurious trash, and conveying them down to posterity in one volume.

Clemens, bishop of *Rome.*

XVIII. The writer, whose fame surpassed that of all others in this century, the apostles excepted, was CLEMENS, bishop of *Rome.* The accounts which remain of his life, actions, and death, are for the most part uncertain [*s*]. *Two Epistles to the*

[*r*] Such of these writings as are yet extant have been carefully collected by the learned FABRICIUS, in his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, which work is published in two volumes. Many ingenious and learned observations have been made on these spurious books by the celebrated BEAUSOBRE, in his *Histoire Critique des dogmes de Manichée*, livr. ii. p. 337, &c.

[*s*] After TILLEMONT, COTELERIUS and GRABE have given some accounts of this great man. And all that has been

CENT. I. PART II.

*the Corinthians* [*t*], written in Greek, have been attributed to him, of which the *ſecond* has been looked upon as ſpurious, and the *firſt* as genuine, by many learned writers [*u*]. But even this latter ſeems to have been corrupted and interpolated by ſome ignorant and preſumptuous author, who appears to have been diſpleaſed at obſerving a defect of learning and genius in the writings of ſo great a man as CLEMENS [*w*].

The writings falſely attributed to him.

XIX. The learned are now unanimous in regarding the other writings which bear the name of CLEMENS, viz. *the Apoſtolic Canons*, *the Apoſtolic Conſtitutions*, *the Recognitions of* CLEMENS *and* CLEMENTINA [*x*], as ſpurious productions aſcribed by

been ſaid concerning him by the beſt and moſt credible writers, has been collected by RONDININI, in the firſt of two books publiſhed at *Rome*, in the year 1706, under the following title, *Libri duo de S. Clemente, Papa, et Martyre, ejuſque Baſilica in urbe Roma.*

[*t*] J. A. FABRICIUS, in the vth chapter of the fourth book of his *Bibliotheca Græca*, mentions the editions that have been given of St. CLEMENT's epiſtles. To this account we muſt add the edition publiſhed at *Cambridge*, in 1718, which is preferable to the preceding ones in many reſpects.

☞ [*u*] See the ample account that is given of theſe two Greek epiſtles of CLEMENS by the learned Dr. LARDNER, in the firſt volume of the ſecond part of his valuable work, entitled, *The Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory*, &c. &c.

[*w*] See J. BAPT. COTELERII *Patres Apoſt.* tom. i. p. 133. and BERNARDI *Adnotatiunculæ in Clementem*, in the laſt edition of theſe *fathers* publiſhed by LE CLERC. The learned WOTTON has endeavoured, though without ſucceſs, in his obſervations on the epiſtles of CLEMENS, to refute the annotations above mentioned.

☞ [*x*] Beſides theſe writings attributed to CLEMENS, we may reckon *Two Epiſtles* which the learned WETSTEIN found in a Syriac verſion of the New Teſtament, which he took the pains to tranſlate from Syriac into Latin, and has ſubjoined both the original and the tranſlation to his famous edition of the Greek Teſtament, publiſhed at *Amſterdam* in two volumes in folio, in the years 1751 and 1752. The title prefixed to theſe epiſtles is as follows: DUÆ EPISTOLÆ *S. Clementis Romani*, Diſcipuli *Petri Apoſtoli*, quas ex Codici Manuſcripto Novi Teſt. Syriaci nunc primum erutas, cum verſione Latinâ adpoſita

by ſome impoſtor to this venerable prelate, in order to procure them a high degree of authority [*y*]. The *Apoſtolical Canons*, which conſiſt of LXXXV *eccleſiaſtical laws*, contain a view of the church government and diſcipline received among the Greek and Oriental Chriſtians in the ſecond and third century. The VIII *books of Apoſtolical Conſtitutions* are the work of ſome auſtere and melancholy author, who, having taken it into his head to reform the Chriſtian worſhip, which he looked upon as degenerated from its original purity, made no ſcruple to prefix to his rules the names of the apoſtles, that thus they might be more ſpeedily and favourably received [*z*]. The *Recognitions* of CLEMENS, which differ very little from the CLEMENTINA, are the witty and agreeable production of an Alexandrian Jew, well verſed in philoſophy. They

adpoſita edidit Jo. JACOBUS WETSTENIUS. The manuſcript of the Syriac verſion, from whence theſe epiſtles were taken, was procured by the good offices of Sir JAMES PORTER, a judicious patron of literature and men of letters, who, at that time, was Britiſh ambaſſador at *Conſtantinople*. The authenticity of theſe epiſtles is boldly maintained by WETSTEIN, and learnedly oppoſed by Dr. LARDNER, in a *Diſſertation upon the two Epiſtles aſcribed to* CLEMENT *of Rome, lately publiſhed by Mr.* WETSTEIN, &c. The celebrated Profeſſor VENEMA of *Franeker* ſuſpected alſo the ſpuriouſneſs of theſe epiſtles; ſee an account of his controverſy with WETSTEIN on that ſubject, in the *Bibliothéque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*, tom. ii. p. 51. &c. p. 311.

[*y*] For an account of the fate of theſe writings, and the editions that have been given of them, it will be proper to conſult two diſſertations of the learned ITTIGIUS; the one *De Patribus Apoſtolicis*, which he has prefixed to his *Bibliotheca Patrum Apoſtolicorum*; and the other, *De Pſeudepigraphis Apoſtolicis*, which he has ſubjoined to the Appendix of his book *De Hæreſiarchis ævi Apoſtolici*. See alſo FABRICIUS's *Bibliotheca Græca*, lib. v. cap. i. p. 31, &c. and lib. vi. cap. i. p. 4.

[*z*] BUDÆUS has collected the various opinions of the learned concerning the *Apoſtolical Canons and Conſtitutions*, in his *Iſagoge in Theologiam*, par. II. ch. v. p. 746.

CENT. I. PART II.

were written in the third century, with a deſign to anſwer, in a new manner, the objections of the Jews, Philoſophers, and Gnoſtics, againſt the Chriſtian religion; and the careful peruſal of them will be extremely uſeful to ſuch as are curious of information with reſpect to the ſtate of the Chriſtian church in the primitive times [*a*].

Ignatius, biſhop of *Antioch.*

XX. IGNATIUS, biſhop of *Antioch*, ſucceeds CLEMENS in the liſt of the *Apoſtolic Fathers*, among whom were placed ſuch Chriſtian doctors as had converſed with the apoſtles themſelves, or their diſciples. This pious and venerable man, who was the diſciple and familiar friend of the apoſtles, was, by the order of TRAJAN, brought to *Rome*, and expoſed to wild beaſts in the public theatre, where he ſuffered martyrdom with the utmoſt conſtancy [*b*]. There are yet extant ſeveral epiſtles, attributed to him, concerning the authenticity of which there have been, however, tedious and warm diſputes among the learned, which ſtill ſubſiſt. Of theſe epiſtles, ſeven are ſaid to have been written by this eminent martyr, during his journey from *Antioch* to *Rome*; and theſe the moſt of learned men acknowledge to be genuine, as they ſtand in the edition that was publiſhed in the laſt century from a manuſcript in the Medicean library. The others are generally rejected as ſpurious. As to my own ſentiments of this matter, though I am willing to adopt this opinion as preferable to any other, yet I cannot help looking upon the

[*a*] See, for a full account of this work, MOSHEIM's diſſertation, *De turbatâ per recentiores Platonicos Eccleſiâ*, § 34. p. 174. ☞ This diſſertation is in the firſt volume of that learned work, which our author publiſhed ſome years ago under the title of *Syntagma Diſſertationum ad Hiſtoriam Eccleſiaſticam pertinentium.*

[*b*] See TILLEMONT's *Memoires pour ſervir à l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, tom. ii. par. II. p. 42—80.

authenticity

authenticity of the *Epiſtle to* POLYCARP as extremely dubious, on account of the difference of ſtyle; and, indeed, the whole queſtion, relating to the epiſtles of St. IGNATIUS in general, ſeems to me to labour under much obſcurity, and to be embarraſſed with many difficulties [*c*].

Polycarp.

XXI. The *Epiſtle to the Philippians*, which is aſcribed to POLYCARP biſhop of *Smyrna*, who, in the middle of the ſecond century, ſuffered martyrdom in a venerable and advanced age, is looked upon by ſome as genuine; by others, as ſpurious; and it is no eaſy matter to determine this queſtion [*d*].

Barnabas.

The *Epiſtle of* BARNABAS was the production of ſome Jew, who, moſt probably, lived in this century, and whoſe mean abilities and ſuperſtitious attachment to Jewiſh fables ſhew, notwithſtanding the uprightneſs of his intentions, that he muſt have been a very different perſon from the true BARNABAS, who was St. PAUL's companion [*e*]. The work, which is entitled, *The Shepherd of* HERMAS, becauſe the angel, who bears the principal part in it, is repreſented in the form and habit of a ſhepherd, was compoſed in the ſecond century by HERMAS, who was brother to PIUS biſhop of *Rome* [*f*]. This whimſical and

[*c*] For an account of this controverſy, concerning the genuineneſs of the epiſtles of IGNATIUS, it will be proper to conſult the *Bibliotheca Græca of* FABRICIUS, lib. v. cap. i. p. 38—47.

[*d*] For an account of this martyr, and of the epiſtle attributed to him, ſee TILLEMONT's *Memoires*, &c. vol. ii. par. II. p. 287; as alſo FABRICII *Biblioth. Græca*, lib. v. cap. i. p. 47.

[*e*] See TILLEMONT's *Memoires*, &c. vol. i. par. III. p. 1043. ITTIGIUS's *Select. Hiſt. Eccleſ. Capita*, § 1. cap. i. § 14. p. 173. and lib. v. cap. i. § 4. p. 4.

[*f*] This now appears with the utmoſt evidence from a very ancient fragment of a ſmall book, concerning the canon of the Holy Scriptures, which the learned LUD. ANTON. MURATORI publiſhed ſome years ago from an ancient manuſcript in the library at *Milan*, and which is to be found in the *Antiq. Italicar. medii ævi*, tom. iii. diſſ. xliii. p. 853.

CENT. I. PART II.

visionary writer has taken the liberty to invent several dialogues or conversations between God and the angels, in order to insinuate, in a more easy and agreeable manner, the precepts which he thought useful and salutary, into the minds of his readers. But indeed the discourse, which he puts into the mouths of those celestial beings, is more insipid and senseless, than what we commonly hear among the meanest of the multitude [g].

The general character of the apostolic fathers.

XXII. We may here remark in general, that these apostolic fathers, and the other writers, who, in the infancy of the church, employed their pens in the cause of Christianty, were neither remarkable for their learning nor their eloquence. On the contrary, they express the most pious and admirable sentiments in the plainest and most illiterate style [h]. This, indeed, is rather a matter of honour than of reproach to the Christian cause; since we see, from the conversion of a great part of mankind to the gospel by the ministry of weak and illiterate men, that the progress of Christianity is not to be attributed to human means, but to a divine power.

[g] We are indebted for the best edition of the *Shepherd of* HERMAS, to FABRICIUS, who has added it to the third volume of his *Codex Apocryphus N. Testamenti*. We find also some account of this writer in the *Biblioth. Græca*, of the same learned author, book v. chap. ix. § 9. p. 7. and also in ITTIGIUS's dissertation, *De Patribus Apostolicis*, § 55. p. 184, &c.

[h] All the writers mentioned in this chapter are usually called *apostolic fathers*. Of these writers, JO. BAPT. COTELERIUS, and after him LE CLERC, have published a collection in two volumes, accompanied both with their own annotations and the remarks of other learned men.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

*Concerning the doctrine of the Chriſtian church in this century.*

The nature of the Chriſtian religion.

I. THE whole of the Chriſtian religion is comprehended in two great points, of which the firſt regards what we are to believe, and the other relates to our conduct and actions; or, to expreſs the matter more briefly, the goſpel preſents to us objects of *faith* and rules of *practice*. The former are expreſſed by the apoſtles by the term *myſtery* or the *truth*; and the latter by that of *godlineſs* or *piety* [*i*]. The rule and ſtandard of both are thoſe books which contain the Revelation, that God made of his will to perſons choſen for that purpoſe, whether before or after the birth of CHRIST. And theſe divine books are uſually called *The Old and New Teſtament*.

Method of interpreting the ſcriptures.

II. The apoſtles and their diſciples took all poſſible care, and that in the earlieſt times of the church, that theſe ſacred books might be in the hands of all Chriſtians, that they might be read and explained in the aſſemblies of the faithful, and thus contribute, both in private and in public, to excite and nouriſh in the minds of Chriſtians a fervent zeal for the truth, and a firm attachment to the ways of piety and virtue. Thoſe who performed the office of interpreters, ſtudied above all things plainneſs and perſpicuity. At the ſame time it muſt be acknowleged, that, even in this century, ſeveral Chriſtians adopted that abſurd and corrupt cuſtom, uſed among the Jews, of darkening the plain words of the Holy Scriptures by inſipid and forced allegories, and of drawing them violently from their proper and natural ſig-

[*i*] 1 Tim. iii. 9. vi. 3. Tit. i. 1.

CENT. I. PART II.

nification, in order to extort from them certain myſterious and hidden ſignifications. For a proof of this, we need go no further than the *Epiſtle of* BARNABAS, which is yet extant.

Of teaching religion.

III. The method of teaching the ſacred doctrines of religion, was, at this time, moſt ſimple, far removed from all the ſubtile rules of philoſophy, and all the precepts of human art. This appears abundantly, not only in the writings of the apoſtles, but alſo in all thoſe of the ſecond century, which have ſurvived the ruins of time. Neither did the apoſtles, or their diſciples, ever think of collecting into a regular ſyſtem the principal doctrines of the Chriſtian religion, or of demonſtrating them in a ſcientific and geometrical order. The beautiful and candid ſimplicity of theſe early ages rendered ſuch philoſophical niceties unneceſſary; and the great ſtudy of thoſe who embraced the goſpel was rather to expreſs its divine influence in their diſpoſitions and actions, than to examine its doctrines with an exceſſive curioſity, or to explain them by the rules of human wiſdom.

The Apoſtles Creed.

IV. There is indeed extant, a brief ſummary of the principal doctrines of Chriſtianity in that *form*, which bears the name of the *Apoſtles Creed*, and which, from the fourth century downwards, was almoſt generally conſidered as a production of the apoſtles. All, however, who have the leaſt knowledge of antiquity, look upon this opinion as entirely falſe and deſtitute of all foundation [*k*]. There is much more reaſon and judgment in the opinion of thoſe, who think that this Creed was not all compoſed at once, but from ſmall beginnings was imperceptibly augmented in proportion to the

[*k*] See BUDÆUS's *Iſagoge ad Theologiam*, lib. i. cap. ii. § 2. p. 441; as alſo WALCHII *Introductio in Libros Symbolicos*, lib. i. cap. ii. p. 87.

growth

growth of hereſy, and according to the exigencies and circumſtances of the church, from whence it was deſigned to baniſh the errors that daily aroſe [*l*].

The diſtinction between catechumens and believers.

V. In the earlieſt times of the church, all who profeſſed firmly to believe that JESUS was the only Redeemer of the world, and who, in conſequence of this profeſſion, promiſed to live in a manner conformable to the purity of his holy religion, were immediately received among the diſciples of CHRIST. This was all the preparation for *baptiſm* then required; and a more accurate inſtruction in the doctrines of Chriſtianity was to be adminiſtered to them after their receiving that ſacrament. But when Chriſtianity had acquired more conſiſtence, and churches roſe to the true God and his eternal Son almoſt in every nation, this cuſtom was changed for the wiſeſt and moſt ſolid reaſons. Then none were admitted to baptiſm, but ſuch as had been previouſly inſtructed in the principal points of Chriſtianity, and had alſo given ſatisfactory proofs of pious diſpoſitions and upright intentions. Hence aroſe the diſtinction between *catechumens*, who were in a ſtate of probation, and under the inſtruction of perſons appointed for that purpoſe; and *believers*, who were conſecrated by baptiſm, and thus initiated into all the myſteries of the Chriſtian faith.

The catechumens differently inſtructed.

VI. The methods of inſtructing the *catechumens* differed according to their various capacities. Thoſe, in whom the natural force of reaſon was ſmall, were taught no more than the fundamental

[*l*] This opinion is confirmed in the moſt learned and ingenious manner by Sir PETER KING, in his *Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Creed*. Such, however, as read this valuable work with pleaſure, and with a certain degree of prepoſſeſſion, would do well to conſider, that its learned author, upon ſeveral occaſions, has given us conjectures inſtead of proofs, and alſo that his conjectures are not always ſo happy, as juſtly to command our aſſent.

CENT. I. PART II.

principles and truths, which are, as it were, the baſis of Chriſtianity. Thoſe, on the contrary, whom their inſtructors judged capable of comprehending, in ſome meaſure, the whole ſyſtem of divine truth, were furniſhed with ſuperior degrees of knowledge; and nothing was concealed from them, which could have any tendency to render them firm in their profeſſion, and to aſſiſt them in arriving at Chriſtian perfection. The care of inſtructing ſuch was committed to perſons who were diſtinguiſhed by their gravity and wiſdom, and alſo by their learning and judgment. And from hence it comes, that the ancient doctors generally divide their flock into two claſſes; the one comprehending ſuch as were ſolidly and thoroughly inſtructed; the other, thoſe who were acquainted with little more than the firſt principles of religion; nor do they deny that the methods of inſtruction applied to theſe two ſorts of perſons were extremely different.

The care of the firſt Chriſtians in the education of their youth.

VII. The Chriſtians took all poſſible care to accuſtom their children to the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, and to inſtruct them in the doctrines of their holy religion; and ſchools were every where erected for this purpoſe, even from the very commencement of the Chriſtian church. We muſt not, however, confound the *ſchools* deſigned only for children, with the *gymnaſia*, or academies of the ancient Chriſtians, erected in ſeveral large cities, in which perſons of riper years, eſpecially ſuch as aſpired to be public teachers, were inſtructed in the different branches both of human learning and of ſacred erudition. We may, undoubtedly, attribute to the apoſtles themſelves, and their injunctions to their diſciples, the excellent eſtabliſhments, in which the youth deſtined to the holy miniſtry received an education ſuitable to the ſolemn office they were to undertake [*m*].

[*m*] 2 Tim. ii. 2.

St.

St. John erected a ſchool of this kind at *Epheſus*, and one of the ſame nature was founded by POLYCARP at *Smyrna* [*n*]. But none of theſe were in a greater repute than that which was eſtabliſhed at *Alexandria* [*o*], which was commonly called the *catechetical ſchool*, and is generally ſuppoſed to have been erected by St. MARK [*p*].

The ſecret doctrine, in what it conſiſted.

VIII. The ancient Chriſtians are ſuppoſed by many to have had a *ſecret doctrine*; and if by this be meant, that they did not teach all in the ſame manner, or reveal all at once, and to all indiſcriminately, the ſublime myſteries of religion, there is nothing in this that may not be fully juſtified. It would have been improper, for example, to propoſe to thoſe, who were yet to be converted to Chriſtianity, the more difficult doctrines of the goſpel, which ſurpaſs the comprehenſion of imperfect mortals. Such were, therefore, firſt inſtructed in thoſe points which are more obvious and plain, until they became capable of higher and more difficult attainments in religious knowledge. Nay, more; even thoſe who were already admitted into the ſociety of Chriſtians, were, in

[*n*] IRENÆUS, *adv. Hæreſ.* lib. ii, cap. xxii. p. 148. ed. Maſſuet. EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xx. p. 188.

☞ [*o*] The Alexandrian ſchool was renowned for a ſucceſſion of learned doctors, as we find by the accounts of EUSEBIUS and St. JEROM; for, after St. MARK, PANTÆNUS, CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, ORIGEN, and many others, taught in it the doctrines of the goſpel, and rendered it a famous ſeminary for Chriſtian philoſophy and religious knowledge. There were alſo at *Rome*, *Antioch*, *Cæſarea*, *Edeſſa*, and in ſeveral other places, ſchools of the ſame nature, though not all of equal reputation.

[*p*] See the diſſertation of SCHMIDIUS, *De Schola Catechetica Alexandrina*; as alſo AULISIUS, *Delle Scuole Sacre*, book ii, ch. i. ii. p. 5—17. and ch. xxi. p. 92. The curious reader will find a learned account of the more famous Chriſtian ſchools in the eaſtern parts, at *Edeſſa*, *Niſibis*, and *Seleucia*, and, indeed, of the ancient ſchools in general, in ASSEMANUS's *Biblioth. Orient. Clement. Vaticanæ*, tom. iii. par. II. p. 914—919.

CENT. I. PART II.

point of inſtruction, differently dealt with according to their reſpective capacities. Thoſe who conſider the *ſecret doctrine* of this century in any other light, or give to it a greater extent than what we have here attributed to it, confound the ſuperſtitious practices of the following ages, with the ſimplicity of the diſcipline which prevailed at the time of which we write [*q*].

The lives and manners of the firſt Chriſtians.

IX. The lives and manners of the Chriſtians in this century are highly celebrated by moſt authors, and recommended to ſucceeding generations as unſpotted models of piety and virtue. And if theſe encomiums be confined to the greateſt part of thoſe, who embraced Chriſtianity in the infancy of the church, they are certainly diſtributed with juſtice. But many run into extremes upon this head, and eſtimating the lives and manners of all by the illuſtrious examples of ſome eminent ſaints, or the ſublime precepts and exhortations of certain pious doctors, fondly imagine that every appearance of vice and diſorder was baniſhed from the firſt Chriſtian ſocieties. The greateſt part of thoſe authors, who have written concerning the innocence and ſanctity of the primitive Chriſtians, have fallen into this agreeable error. And a groſs error indeed it is, as the ſtrongeſt teſtimonies too evidently prove.

Excommunication.

X. One of the circumſtances which contributed chiefly to preſerve, at leaſt, an external appearance of ſanctity in the Chriſtian church, was the right of excluding from thence, and from all participation of the ſacred rites and ordinances of the goſpel, ſuch as had been guilty of enormous tranſgreſſions, and to whom repeated exhortations to repentance and amendment had been admini-

[*q*] May learned obſervations upon the *ſecret diſcipline* have been collected by the celebrated CHRISTOPH. MATT. PFAFFIUS, in his *Diſſert. poſter. de Præjudiciis Theolog.* § 13. p. 149, &c. *in Primitiis Tubingenſibus.*

ſtered in vain. This right was veſted in the church, from the earlieſt period of its exiſtence, by the apoſtles themſelves, and was exerciſed by each Chriſtian aſſembly upon its reſpective members. The rulers or doctors denounced the perſons whom they thought unworthy of the privileges of church-communion, and the people, freely approving or rejecting their judgment, pronounced the deciſive ſentence. It was not, however, irrevocable; for ſuch as gave undoubted ſigns of their ſincere repentance, and declared their ſolemn reſolutions of future reformation, were re-admitted into the church, however enormous their crimes had been; but, in caſe of a relapſe, their ſecond excluſion became abſolutely irreverſible [*r*].

Controverſies among Chriſtians.

XI. It will eaſily be imagined, that unity and peace could not reign long in the church, ſince it was compoſed of Jews and Gentiles, who regarded each other with the bittereſt averſion. Beſides, as the converts to Chriſtianity could not extirpate radically the prejudices which had been formed in their minds by education, and confirmed by time, they brought with them into the boſom of the church more or leſs of the errors of their former religions. Thus the ſeeds of diſcord and controverſy were early ſown, and could not fail to ſpring up ſoon into animoſities and diſſenſions, which accordingly broke out and divided the church. The firſt of theſe controverſies, which was ſet on foot in the church of *Antioch*, regarded the neceſſity of obſerving the law of MOSES, and its iſſue is mentioned by St. LUKE in *The Acts of the Apoſtles* [*s*]. This controverſy was followed by many others, either with the Jews, who were violently attached to the worſhip of their anceſ-

[*r*] See MORINUS, *Comm. de Diſciplina Pœnitentiæ*, lib. ix. cap. xix. p. 670.

[*s*] Chap. xv.

tors,

CENT. I. PART II.

tors, or with the votaries of a wild and fanatical ſort of philoſophy, or with ſuch as, miſtaking the true genius of the Chriſtian religion, abuſed it monſtrouſly, to the encouragement of their vices, and the indulgence of their appetites and paſſions [*t*]. St. PAUL and the other Apoſtles have, in ſeveral places of their writings, mentioned theſe controverſies, but with ſuch brevity, that it is difficult, at this diſtance of time, to come at the true ſtate of the queſtion in theſe various diſputes.

Controverſy about the terms of acceptance and ſalvation.

XII. The moſt weighty and important of all theſe controverſies was that, which certain Jewiſh doctors raiſed at *Rome*, and in other Chriſtian churches, concerning the means of juſtification and acceptance with God, and the method of ſalvation pointed out in the word of God. The apoſtles, wherever they exerciſed their miniſtry, had conſtantly declared all hopes of acceptance and ſalvation deluſive, except ſuch as were founded on JESUS the Redeemer, and his all-ſufficient *merits*, while the Jewiſh doctors maintained the *works* of the law to be the true efficient cauſe of the ſoul's eternal ſalvation and felicity. This latter ſentiment not only led to many other errors extremely prejudicial to Chriſtianity, but was alſo injurious to the glory of the divine Saviour. For thoſe who looked upon a courſe of life conformable to the law, as a meritorious title to eternal happineſs, could not conſider CHRIST as the ſon of God, and the Saviour of mankind, but only as an eminent prophet, or a divine meſſenger ſent from above to enlighten and inſtruct a darkened world. It is not, therefore, ſurpriſing, that St. PAUL took ſo much pains in his *Epiſtle to the Ro-*

[*t*] See, for an illuſtration of theſe points, WITSIUS's *Miſcellanea Sacra*, tom. ii. *Exercit.* xx, xxi, xxii. p. 668. As alſo CAMP. VITRINGA, *Obſerv. Sacræ*, lib. iv. cap. ix, x, xi, p. 952.

*mans*, and in his other writings, to extirpate ſuch a pernicious and capital error.

Judaizing Chriſtians.

XIII. The controverſy that had been raiſed concerning the neceſſity of obſerving the ceremonies of the Moſaic law, was determined by the apoſtles in the wiſeſt and moſt prudent manner [*u*]. Their authority, however, reſpectable as it was, had not its full effect. For the prejudices, which the Jews, eſpecially thoſe who lived in *Paleſtine*, entertained in favour of the Moſaic law, and their ancient worſhip, were ſo deeply rooted in their minds, that they could not be thoroughly removed. The force of theſe prejudices was, indeed ſomewhat diminiſhed after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the ruin of the temple, but not entirely deſtroyed. And hence, as we ſhall ſee in its place, a part of the judaizing Chriſtians ſeparated themſelves from the reſt, and formed a particular ſect, diſtinguiſhed by their adherence to the law of MOSES.

## CHAP. IV.

### *Concerning the rites and ceremonies uſed in the church during this century.*

Baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper inſtituted by CHRIST.

I. THE Chriſtian religion was ſingularly commendable on account of its beautiful and divine ſimplicity, which appears from the two great and fundamental principles on which it was built, *viz. faith and charity*. This ſimplicity was not, however, incompatible with certain external rights, and poſitive inſtitutions, which, indeed, are neceſſary, in this imperfect ſtate, to keep alive a ſenſe of religion in the minds of men. The rites inſtituted by CHRIST himſelf were only

[*u*] Acts xv.

two

CENT. I. PART II.

two in number, and these designed to continue to the end of the church here below, without any variation. These rites were *baptism* and the *holy supper*, which are not to be considered as mere ceremonies, nor yet as symbolic representations only, but also as ordinances accompanied with a sanctifying influence upon the heart and the affections of true Christians. And we cannot help observing here, that, since the divine Saviour thought fit to appoint no more than two plain institutions in his church, this shews us that a number of ceremonies is not essential to his religion, and that he left it to the free and prudent choice of Christians to establish such rites as the circumstances of the times, or the exigencies of the church, might require.

Rites instituted by the apostles.

II. There are several circumstances which incline us to think that the friends and apostles of our blessed Lord, either tolerated through necessity, or appointed for wise reasons, many other external rites in various places. At the same time we are not to imagine that they ever conferred upon any person a perpetual, indelible, pontifical authority, or that they enjoined the same rites in all churches. We learn, on the contrary, from authentic records, that the Christian worship was, from the beginning, celebrated in a different manner in different places, and that, no doubt, by the orders, or at least with the approbation, of the apostles and their disciples. In these early times it was both wise and necessary, to shew, in the establishment of outward forms of worship, some indulgence to the ancient opinions, manners, and laws, of the respective nations to whom the gospel was preached.

The Jewish rites retained in several places.

III. From hence it follows, that the opinion of those who maintain that the Jewish rites were adopted *every where*, in the Christian churches, by order of the apostles, or their disciples, is destitute

tute of all foundation. In thoſe Chriſtian ſocieties, which were totally or principally compoſed of Jewiſh converts, it was natural to retain as much of the Jewiſh ritual as the genius of Chriſtianity would ſuffer, and a multitude of examples teſtify that this was actually done. But that the ſame tranſlation of Jewiſh rites ſhould take place in Chriſtian churches, where there were no Jews, or a very ſmall and inconſiderable number, is utterly incredible, becauſe ſuch an event was morally impoſſible. In a word, the external forms of worſhip uſed in the times of old, muſt neceſſarily have been regulated and modified according to the character, genius, and manners, of the different nations on which the light of the goſpel aroſe.

Public aſſemblies of Chriſtians.

IV. Since then there was ſuch a variety in the ritual and diſcipline of the primitive churches, it muſt be very difficult to give ſuch an account of the worſhip, manners, and inſtitutions, of the ancient Chriſtians, as will agree with what was practiſed in all thoſe countries where the goſpel flouriſhed. There are, notwithſtanding, certain laws, whoſe authority and obligation were univerſal and indiſpenſable among all Chriſtians, and of theſe we ſhall here give a brief account. All Chriſtians were unanimous in ſetting apart the firſt day of the week, on which the triumphant Saviour aroſe from the dead, for the ſolemn celebration of public worſhip. This pious cuſtom, which was derived from the example of the church of *Jeruſalem*, was founded upon the expreſs appointment of the apoſtles, who conſecrated that day to the ſame ſacred purpoſe, and was obſerved univerſally throughout all the Chriſtian churches, as appears from the united teſtimonies of the moſt credible writers [*w*]. The ſeventh day of the week was alſo

[*w*] PHIL. JAC. HARTMANNUS, *De rebus geſtis Chriſtianorum ſub Apoſtolis*, cap. xv. p. 387. JUST. HENN. BÖHMER, *Diſſert.*

CENT. I. PART II.

also observed as a festival [x], not by the Christians in general, but by such churches only as were principally composed of Jewish converts, nor did the other Christians censure this custom as criminal and unlawful. It appears, moreover, that all the Christian churches observed two great anniversary festivals; the one in memory of CHRIST's glorious resurrection; and the other to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles [y]. To these we may add the days on which the blessed martyrs laid down their lives for the truth, which days were probably dignified with particular solemnities and marks of veneration from the earliest times.

V. The places in which the first Christians assembled to celebrate divine worship, were, no doubt, the houses of private persons. But in process of time it became necessary, that these sacred assemblies should be confined to one fixed place,

*Dissert.* i. *Juris Eccles. Antiqui de stato die Christianor.* p. 20, &c.

[x] STEPH. CURCELLIUS, *Diatriba de esu Sanguinis, Operum Theolog.* p. 958. GAB. ALBASPINÆUS, *Observat. Eccles.* lib. i. *Observ.* xiii. p. 53. It is in vain that many learned men have laboured to prove, that in *all* the primitive churches, both the first and last day of the week were observed as festivals. The churches of *Bithynia*, of which PLINY speaks in his letter to TRAJAN, had only *one stated day*, for the celebration of public worship; and that was, undoubtedly, the first day of the week, or what we call the *Lord's Day*.

[y] There are, it is true, learned men, who look upon it as a doubtful matter, whether or no the day of Pentecost was celebrated as a festival so early as the first century. See BINGHAM's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book xx. ch. vi. p. 120. But notwithstanding this, there are many weighty reasons for believing that festival as ancient as that of Easter, which was celebrated, as all agree, from the very first rise of the church. It is also probable, that Friday, the day of CHRIST's crucifixion, was early distinguished by particular honours from the other days of the week. See JAC. GODOFRED, *in Codicem Theodosii*, tom. i. p. 138. ASSEMAN. *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 217. 237. MARTENE, *Thesaur. Anecdot.* tom. v. p. 66.

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in which the books, tables, and desks, required in divine service, might be constantly kept, and the dangers avoided, which, in those perilous times, attended their transportation from one place to another. And then, probably, the places of meeting, that had formerly belonged to private persons, became the property of the whole Christian community [z]. These few remarks are, in my opinion, sufficient to determine that question, which has been so long and so tediously debated, *viz. whether the first Christians had churches, or not* [a]? Since if any are pleased to give the name of a *church* to a house, or the part of a house, which, though appointed as the place of religious worship, was neither separated from common use, nor considered as holy in the opinion of the people, it will be readily granted that the most ancient Christians had churches.

The manner of conducting the public worship in these assemblies.

VI. In these assemblies the holy scriptures were publicly read, and for that purpose were divided into certain portions or lessons. This part of divine service was followed by a brief exhortation to the people, in which eloquence and art gave place to the natural and fervent expression of zeal and charity. If any declared themselves extraordinarily animated by the Holy Spirit, they were permitted to explain successively the divine will, while the other prophets who were present, decided how much weight and authority was to be attributed to what they said [b]. The prayers, which made a considerable part of the public worship, came in at the conclusion of these discourses,

[z] See CAMP. VITRINGA, *De synagoga vetere*, lib. i. par. III. cap. i. p. 432.

[a] See BLONDEL, *De Episcopis et Presbyteris*, § 3. p. 216. 243. 246. JUST. HENN. BÖHMER, *Dissert.* ii. *Juris Eccles. Antiqui, de Antelucanis Christianorum Cœtibus*, § 4. p. 39. BINGHAM'S *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book viii. ch. i. § 3, 4, 5, 6.

[b] 1 Cor. xiv. 6.

and

and were repeated by the people after the biſhop or preſbyter, who preſided in the ſervice [*c*]. To theſe were added certain hymns, which were ſung, not by the whole aſſembly, but by perſons appointed for that purpoſe, during the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, and the feaſts of charity. Such were the eſſential parts of divine worſhip, which were obſerved in all Chriſtian churches, though perhaps the method and order, in which they were performed, were not the ſame in all [*d*].

The Lord's ſupper, and the feaſts of charity.

VII. The prayers of the firſt Chriſtians were followed by *oblations* of bread, wine, and other things; and hence both the miniſters of the church, and the poor, derived their ſubſiſtence. Every Chriſtian, who was in an opulent condition, and indeed every one, according to their circumſtances, brought with them their gifts, and offered them, as it were, unto the Lord [*e*]. Of the bread and wine, preſented in theſe offerings, ſuch a quantity was ſeparated from the reſt, as was required in the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper; this was conſecrated by certain prayers pronounced by the biſhop alone, to which the people aſſented by ſaying *Amen* [*f*]. The holy ſupper was diſtributed by the *deacons*; and this ſacred inſtitution was followed by ſober repaſts, which, from the excellent end they were deſigned

[*c*] See JUSTIN MARTYR, his ſecond Apology, p. 98, &c.

[*d*] This muſt be underſtood of churches well eſtabliſhed, and regulated by fixed and certain laws. For in the firſt Chriſtian aſſemblies, which were yet in an imperfect and fluctuating ſtate, one or other of theſe circumſtances of divine worſhip may poſſibly have been omitted.

[*e*] See the diſſertations of the venerable and learned PFAFF, *De oblatione et conſecratione Euchariſtica*, which are contained in his *Syntagma Diſſertation. Theologic.* publiſhed at *Stutgard*, in 8vo. in the year 1720.

[*f*] JUSTIN MARTYR *Apologia ſecunda*, p. 98. The ſeveral authors who have written concerning the manner of celebrating the Lord's ſupper, are mentioned by Jo. ALB. FABRICIUS, in his *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* cap. xi. p. 395, &c.

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to promote, were called *agapæ*, or *feaſts* of charity [*g*]. Many attempts have been made to fix preciſely the nature of theſe ſocial feaſts. But here it muſt be again conſidered, that the rites and cuſtoms of the primitive Chriſtians were very different in different countries, and that conſequently theſe feaſts, like other inſtitutions, were not every where celebrated in the ſame manner. This is the true and only way of explaining all the difficulties that can ariſe upon this ſubject.

VIII. The ſacrament of *baptiſm* was adminiſtered in this century, without the public aſſemblies, in places appointed and prepared for that purpoſe, and was performed by immerſion of the whole body in the baptiſmal font [*b*]. At firſt it was uſual for all who laboured in the propagation of the goſpel, to be preſent at that ſolemn ceremony; and it was alſo cuſtomary, that the converts ſhould be baptized and received into the church by thoſe under whoſe miniſtry they had embraced the Chriſtian doctrine. But this cuſtom was ſoon changed. When the Chriſtian churches were well eſtabliſhed and governed by a ſyſtem of fixed laws, then the right of baptizing the Chriſtian converts was veſted in the biſhop alone. This right, indeed, he conferred upon the *preſbyters* and *chorepiſcopi*, or *country biſhops*, when the bounds of the church were ſtill further enlarged, reſerving, however, to himſelf the *confirmation* of the baptiſm, which was adminiſtered by a preſby-

Baptiſm.

[*g*] The authors who have written concerning the *Agapæ*, or *Feaſts of charity*, are mentioned by ITTIGIUS, in his *Selecta Hiſtoriæ Eccleſ. Capita*, Sæc. ii. cap. iii. p. 180. and alſo by PFAFF, *De Originibus Juris Eccleſ.* p. 68.

[*b*] See the learned diſſertation of Jo. GERARD VOSSIUS concerning baptiſm, *Diſp.* i. *Theſ.* vi. p. 31, &c. The reader will alſo find in the xiith chapter and xxvth ſection of the *Bibliogr. Antiquar.* of the celebrated FABRICIUS, an account of the authors who have written upon this ſubject.

ter [*i*]. There were, doubtleſs, ſeveral circumſtantial rites and ceremonies obſerved, in the adminiſtration of this ſacrament, for the ſake of order and decency. Of theſe, however, it is not eaſy, nor, perhaps, poſſible, to give a certain or ſatisfactory account; ſince, upon this ſubject, we are too much expoſed to the illuſion, which ariſes from confounding the cuſtoms of the primitive times with thoſe of ſucceeding ages.

The ſick anointed.

IX. Thoſe who were viſited with violent or dangerous diſorders, ſent, according to the apoſtle's direction [*k*], for the rulers of the church, and, after confeſſing their ſins, were recommended by them to the divine mercy in prayers full of piety and fervour, and were alſo anointed with oil. This rite has occaſioned many debates, and, indeed, they muſt be endleſs, ſince the ſilence of the ancient writers, upon that head, renders it impoſſible to decide the matter with any degree of certainty. The anointing the ſick is very rarely mentioned in the ancient records of the church, though there is no reaſon to doubt of its having been an univerſal cuſtom among Chriſtians [*l*].

Faſting introduced.

X. Neither CHRIST nor his apoſtles enacted any law concerning *faſting*. A cuſtom, however, prevailed among many Chriſtians of joining abſti-

[*i*] Theſe obſervations will illuſtrate and perhaps decide the queſtion, concerning the right of adminiſtering baptiſm, which has been ſo long debated among the learned, and with ſuch ardour and vehemence. See BÖHMER, *Diſſert.* xi. *Juris Eccleſ.* p. 500. as alſo LE CLERC *Biblioth. Univerſelle et Hiſtorique*, tom. iv. p. 93.

[*k*] James, v. 14.

[*l*] The accounts which the ancient authors have given of this cuſtom, are, the moſt of them, collected in a treatiſe publiſhed by LAUNOIUS, *De ſacramentis unctionis infirmorum*, cap. i. p. 444. in the firſt volume of his works. Among theſe accounts there are very few drawn from the writers of the firſt ages, and ſome paſſages applicable to this ſubject have been omitted by that learned author.

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nence with their prayers, eſpecially when they were engaged in affairs of extraordinary moment and importance [*m*]. As this cuſtom was authorized by no public law, the time that was to be employed in theſe acts of abſtinence was left to every one's private judgment, nor were thoſe looked upon as criminal, who contented themſelves with obſerving the rules of a ſtrict temperance, without going any further [*n*]. In the moſt ancient times we find no mention of any public and ſolemn faſts, except upon the anniverſary of CHRIST's crucifixion. But, in proceſs of time, days of faſting were gradually introduced, firſt by cuſtom, and afterwards by poſitive appointment; though it is not certain what thoſe days were, nor whether they were obſerved in the firſt century. Thoſe, notwithſtanding, who affirm that, in the time of the apoſtles, or ſoon after, the fourth and ſixth days of the week were obſerved as faſts, are not, it muſt be acknowledged, deſtitute of ſpecious arguments in favour of their opinion [*o*].



## CHAP. V.

### *Concerning the diviſions and hereſies which troubled the church during this century.*

I. THE Chriſtian church was ſcarcely formed, when, in different places, there ſtarted up certain pretended reformers, who, not ſatisfied with the ſimplicity of that religion which was taught by the apoſtles, meditated changes of doc-

Sects are formed in the time of the apoſtles.

[*m*] 1 Cor. vii. 5.

[*n*] See the *Shepherd of Hermas*, book iii. *Similitud.* v. p. 931. 935. edition of FABRICIUS.

[*o*] See BEVEREGE's *Vindication of the Canon*, in the ſecond volume of his edition of the *Apoſtolic Fathers*, p. 166.

CENT. I. PART II.

trine and worſhip, and ſet up a new religion drawn from their own licentious imaginations. This we learn from the writings of the apoſtles, and particularly from the epiſtles of St. PAUL, where we find that ſome were for forcing the doctrines of Chriſtianity into a conformity with the philoſophical ſyſtems they had adopted [*p*], while others were as ſtudious to blend with theſe doctrines the opinions, cuſtoms, and traditions, of the Jews. Several of theſe are mentioned by the apoſtles, ſuch as HYMENÆUS, ALEXANDER, PHILETES, HERMOGENES, DEMAS, and DIOTREPHES; though the four laſt are rather to be conſidered as apoſtates from the truth, than as corrupters of it [*q*].

and grow imperceptibly.

II. The influence of theſe new teachers was but inconſiderable at firſt. During the lives of the apoſtles, their attempts towards the perverſion of Chriſtianity were attended with little ſucceſs, and the number of their followers was exceeding ſmall. They, however, acquired credit and ſtrength by degrees; and even, from the firſt dawn of the goſpel, laid, imperceptibly, the foundations of thoſe ſects, whoſe animoſities and diſputes produced afterwards ſuch trouble and perplexity in the Chriſtian church. The true ſtate of theſe diviſions is more involved in darkneſs than any other part of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory; and this obſcurity proceeds partly from the want of ancient records, partly from the abſtruſe and unintelligible nature of the doctrines that diſtinguiſhed theſe various ſects; and, finally, from the ignorance and prejudices of thoſe, who have tranſmitted to us the ac-

[*p*] 1 Tim. vi. 20. 1 Tim. i. 3, 4. Tit. iii. 9. Col. ii. 8.

[*q*] 2 Tim. ii. 18. and in other places. See alſo the accurate accounts given of theſe men by VITRINGA, *Obſerv. Sacr.* lib. iv. cap. ix. p. 952. ITTIGIUS, *De hæreſiarchis ævi Apoſtol.* § i. cap. viii. p. 84. BUDDEUS, *De Eccleſia Apoſtolica*, cap. v. p. 292, &c.

counts

counts of them, which are yet extant. Of one thing indeed we are certain, and that is, that the moſt of theſe doctrines were chimerical and extravagant in the higheſt degree; and ſo far from containing any thing that could recommend them to a lover of truth, that they rather deſerve to occupy a place in the hiſtory of human deluſion and folly [*r*].

The ſect of the Gnoſtics.

III. Among the various ſects that troubled the tranquillity of the Chriſtian church, the leading one was that of the Gnoſtics. Theſe enthuſiaſtic and ſelf-ſufficient philoſophers boaſted of their being able to reſtore mankind to the *knowledge (gnoſis)* of the true and ſupreme Being, which had been loſt in the world. They alſo foretold the approaching defeat of the *evil principle*, to whom they attributed the creation of this globe, and declared, in the moſt pompous terms, the deſtruction of his aſſociates, and the ruin of his empire. An opinion has prevailed, derived from the authority of CLEMENS the Alexandrian, that the firſt riſe of the Gnoſtic ſect is to be dated after the death of the apoſtles, and placed under the reign of the emperor ADRIAN; and it is alſo al-

[*r*] Certain authors have written profeſſedly concerning the ſects that divided the church in this and the following century, ſuch as ITTIGIUS in his treatiſe, *De hæreſiarchis ævi Apoſtolici et Apoſtolico proximi*, printed at *Leipſick* in 1690, and alſo in the Appendix to the ſame work, publiſhed in 1696. RENATUS MASSUET, in his *Diſſertations* prefixed to IRENÆUS, and TILLEMONT, in his *Memoires pour ſervir à l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*. But theſe authors, and others whom we ſhall not mention, have rather collected the materials, from which an hiſtory of the ancient ſects may be compoſed, than written their hiſtory. HINCKELMAN, THOMASIUS, DODWELL, HORBIUS, and BASNAGE, have ſome of them promiſed, others of them attempted, ſuch a hiſtory; but none of them have finiſhed this uſeful deſign. It is therefore to be wiſhed, that ſome eminent writer, who, with a competent knowledge of ancient philoſophy and literature, is alſo poſſeſſed of a penetrating and unbiaſſed judgment, would undertake this difficult, but intereſting, work.

CENT. I. PART II.

leged, that, before this time, the church enjoyed a perfect tranquillity, undisturbed by dissensions or sects of any kind. But the smallest degree of attention to the language of the Holy Scriptures, not to mention the authority of other ancient records, will prevent our adopting this groundless notion. For, from several passages of the sacred writings [s], it evidently appears, that, even in the first century, the general meeting of Christians was deserted, and separate assemblies formed in several places, by persons infected with the Gnostic heresy; though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that this pernicious sect was not conspicuous, either for its number or its reputation, before the time of ADRIAN. It is proper just to observe here, that under the general appellation of Gnostics are comprehended all those who, in the first ages of Christianity, corrupted the doctrine of the gospel by a profane mixture of the tenets of the oriental philosophy (concerning the origin of evil and the creation of the world) with its divine truths.

sprung from the oriental philosophy,

IV. It was from this oriental philosophy, of which the leading principles have been already mentioned, that the Christian Gnostics derived their origin. If it was one of the chief tenets of this philosophy, that rational souls were imprisoned in corrupt matter, contrary to the will of the Supreme Deity; there were however, in this same system, other doctrines which promised a deliverance from this deplorable state of servitude and darkness. The oriental sages expected the arrival of an extraordinary messenger of the Most High upon earth; a messenger invested with a divine authority, endowed with the most eminent sanctity and wisdom, and peculiarly appointed to enlighten, with the knowledge of the Supreme

[s] 1 John ii. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 20. Col. ii. 8.

Being,

Being, the darkened minds of miſerable mortals, and to deliver them from the chains of the tyrants and uſurpers of this world. When, therefore, ſome of theſe philoſophers perceived that CHRIST and his followers wrought miracles of the moſt amazing kind, and alſo of the moſt ſalutary nature to mankind, they were eaſily induced to believe that he was the great meſſenger expected from above, to deliver men from the power of the malignant *genii*, or ſpirits, to which, according to their doctrine, the world was ſubjected, and to free their ſouls from the dominion of corrupt matter. This ſuppoſition once admitted, they interpreted, or rather corrupted, all the precepts and doctrines of CHRIST and his apoſtles, in ſuch a manner, as to reconcile them with their own pernicious tenets.

occaſions many pernicious errors concerning the ſcriptures and other matters.

V. From the falſe principle above mentioned aroſe, as it was but natural to expect, a multitude of ſentiments and notions moſt remote from the tenor of the goſpel doctrines, and the nature of its precepts. The Gnoſtic doctrine, concerning the creation of the world by one or more inferior beings of an evil, or, at leaſt, of an imperfect nature, led that ſect to deny the divine authority of the books of the Old Teſtament, whoſe accounts of the origin of things ſo palpably contradicted this idle fiction. Through a frantic averſion to theſe ſacred books, they laviſhed their encomiums upon the *ſerpent*, the firſt author of ſin, and held in veneration ſome of the moſt impious and profligate perſons, of whom mention is made in ſacred hiſtory. The pernicious influence of their fundamental principle carried them to all ſorts of extravagance, filled them with an abhorrence of MOSES and the religion he taught, and made them aſſert, that, in impoſing ſuch a ſyſtem of diſagreeable and ſevere laws upon the Jews, he was only actuated by the malignant author of this

CENT. I. PART II.

world, who conſulted his own glory and authority, and not the real advantage of men. Their perſuaſion that *evil* reſided in *matter*, as its center and ſource, prevented their treating the body with that regard that is due to it, rendered them unfavourable to wedlock, as the means by which corporeal beings are multiplied, and led them to reject the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, and its future re-union with the immortal ſpirit. Their notion, that malevolent *genii* preſided in nature, and that from them proceeded all diſeaſes and calamities, wars and deſolations, induced them to apply themſelves to the ſtudy of magic, to weaken the powers, or ſuſpend the influences, of theſe malignant agents. I omit the mention of ſeveral other extravagancies in their ſyſtem, the enumeration of which would be incompatible with the character of a compendious hiſtory.

Their opinions concerning CHRIST.

VI. The notions of this ſect concerning JESUS CHRIST were impious and extravagant. For, though they conſidered him as the Son of the Supreme God ſent from the *pleroma*, or habitation of the Everlaſting Father, for the happineſs of miſerable mortals; yet they entertained unworthy ideas both of his perſon and offices. They denied his deity, looking upon him as the Son of God, and conſequently inferior to the Father; and they rejected his humanity, upon the ſuppoſition that every thing concrete and corporeal is in itſelf eſſentially and intrinſically evil. From hence the greateſt part of the Gnoſtics denied that CHRIST was clothed with a *real* body, or that he ſuffered *really*, for the ſake of mankind, the pains and ſorrows which he is ſaid to have ſuſtained, in the ſacred hiſtory. They maintained that he came to mortals with no other view, than to deprive the tyrants of this world of their influence upon virtuous and heaven-born ſouls, and, deſtroying the empire of theſe wicked ſpirits, to teach mankind,

kind, how they might ſeparate the divine mind from the impure body, and render the former worthy of being united to the Father of Spirits.

Their moral doctrines.

VII. Their doctrine relating to morals and practice was of two kinds, and thoſe extremely different from each other. The greateſt part of this ſect adopted rules of life that were full of auſterity, recommended a ſtrict and rigorous abſtinence, and preſcribed the moſt ſevere bodily mortifications, from a notion that they had a happy influence in purifying and enlarging the mind, and in diſpoſing it for the contemplation of celeſtial things. As they looked upon it to be the unhappineſs of the ſoul to have been aſſociated, at all, to a malignant, terreſtrial, body; ſo they imagined, that the more that body was extenuated, the leſs it would corrupt and degrade the mind, or divert it from purſuits of a ſpiritual and divine nature: all the Gnoſtics, however, were not ſo ſevere in their moral diſcipline. Some maintained that there was no moral difference in human actions; and thus, confounding right with wrong, they gave a looſe rein to all the paſſions, and aſſerted the innocence of following blindly all their motions, and of living by their tumultuous dictates [*t*]. There is nothing ſurpriſing or unaccountable in this difference between the Gnoſtic moraliſts. For, when we examine the matter with attention, we ſhall find that the ſame doctrine may very naturally have given riſe to theſe oppoſite ſentiments. As they all in general conſidered the body as the center and ſource of evil, thoſe of that ſect, who were of a moroſe and auſtere diſpoſition, would be hence naturally led to mortify and combat the body as the enemy of the ſoul; and thoſe who were of a voluptuous turn,

[*t*] See CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, *Stromatum*, lib. iii. cap. v. p. 529. edit. Potter.

might

CENT. I. PART II.

might alſo conſider the actions of the body, as having no relation, either of congruity or incongruity, to the ſtate of a ſoul in communion with God.

*How their doctrines were ſupported.*

VIII. Such extraordinary doctrines had certainly need of an undoubted authority to ſupport them; and as this authority was not to be found in the writings of the evangeliſts or apoſtles, recourſe was had to fables and ſtratagems. When the Gnoſtics were challenged to produce the ſources from whence they had drawn ſuch ſtrange tenets, and an authority proper to juſtify the confidence with which they taught them; ſome referred to fictitious writings of ABRAHAM, ZOROASTER, CHRIST, and his apoſtles; others boaſted of their having drawn theſe opinions from certain ſecret doctrines of CHRIST, which were not expoſed to vulgar eyes; others affirmed, that they had arrived at theſe ſublime degrees of wiſdom by an innate force and vigour of mind; and others aſſerted, that they were inſtructed in theſe myſterious parts of theological ſcience by THEUDAS, a diſciple of St. PAUL, and by MATTHIAS, one of the friends of our Lord. As to thoſe among the Gnoſtics, who did not utterly reject the books of the New Teſtament, it is proper to obſerve, that they not only interpreted thoſe ſacred books moſt abſurdly, by neglecting the true ſpirit of the words and the intention of the writers, but alſo corrupted them, in the moſt perfidious manner, by curtailing and adding, in order to remove what was unfavourable, or to produce ſomething conformable, to their pernicious and extravagant ſyſtem.

*Whence the diſſenſions among this ſect.*

IX. It has been already obſerved, that the Gnoſtics were divided in their opinions before they embraced Chriſtianity. This appears from the account which has been given above of the oriental philoſophy; and from hence we may ſee the reaſon, why they were formed into ſo many different ſects

ſects after their receiving the Chriſtian faith. For, as every one endeavoured to force the doctrines of the goſpel into a conformity with their particular ſentiments and tenets, ſo Chriſtianity muſt have appeared in different forms, among the different members of a ſect, which paſſed, however, under one general name. Another circumſtance which alſo contributed to the diverſity of ſects among this people was, that ſome being Jews by birth, (as CERINTHUS and others,) could not ſo eaſily aſſume that contempt of MOSES, and that averſion to his hiſtory, which were ſo virulently indulged by thoſe who had no attachment to the Jewiſh nation, nor to its religious inſtitutions. We obſerve, in the laſt place, that the whole religious and philoſophical ſyſtem of the Gnoſtics was deſtitute of any ſure or ſolid foundation, and depended, both for its exiſtence and ſupport, upon the airy ſuggeſtions of genius and fancy. This conſideration alone is a ſufficient key to explain the diviſions that reigned in this ſect; ſince *uniformity* can never ſubſiſt, with aſſurance, but upon the baſis of evident and ſubſtantial truth; and *variety* muſt naturally introduce itſelf into thoſe ſyſtems and inſtitutions, which are formed and conducted by the ſole powers of invention and fancy. CENT. I. PART II.

X. As then the Chriſtian religion was, in its firſt riſe, corrupted in ſeveral places by the mixture of an impious and chimerical philoſophy with its pure and ſublime doctrines, it will be proper to mention here the heads of thoſe ſects, who, in the firſt century, caſt a cloud upon the luſtre of the riſing church. Among theſe, many give the firſt place to DOSITHEUS, a Samaritan. It is certain, that about the time of our Saviour, a man, ſo named, lived among the Samaritans, and abandoned that ſect; but all the accounts we have of him tend to ſhew, that he is improperly placed among thoſe called *Heretics*, and ſhould rather be ranked Doſitheus.

CENT. I. PART II.

ranked among the enemies of Chriſtianity. For this delirious man ſet himſelf up for the MESSIAH, whom God had promiſed to the Jews, and diſowning, of conſequence, the divine miſſion of CHRIST, could not be ſaid to corrupt his doctrine [*u*].

Simon Magus not properly an heretic.

XI. The ſame obſervation holds true with reſpect to SIMON MAGUS. This impious man is not to be ranked among the number of thoſe, who corrupted, with their errors, the purity and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian doctrine; nor is he to be conſidered as the parent and chief of the heretical tribe, in which point of light he has been injudiciouſly viewed by almoſt all ancient and modern writers. He is rather to be placed in the number of thoſe who were enemies to the progreſs and advancement of Chriſtianity. For it is manifeſt from all the records we have concerning him, that, after his defection from the Chriſtians, he retained not the leaſt attachment to CHRIST, but oppoſed himſelf openly to the divine Saviour, and aſſumed to himſelf blaſphemouſly the title of the *ſupreme power of God* [*w*].

His hiſtory

XII. The accounts, which ancient writers give us of SIMON the magician, and of his opinions, ſeem ſo different, and indeed ſo inconſiſtent with each other, that certain learned men have conſidered them as regarding two different perſons, bearing the name of SIMON; the one a magician, and an apoſtate from Chriſtianity; the other a Gnoſtic philoſopher. This opinion, which ſuppoſes a fact without any other proof than a ſeeming difference in the narration of the ancient hiſtorians, ought not to be too lightly adopted. To depart from the authority of ancient writers in

[*u*] See BASNAGE, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, lib. ii. cap. xiii. RICH. SIMON, *Critique de la Bibliothéque des Auteurs Eccleſiaſtiques de Du Pin*, tom. iii. cap. xiii. p. 304.

[*w*] *Origen adv. Celſum*, lib. v. p. 272. edit. Spenceri.

this

this matter is by no means prudent; nor is it neceſſary to reconcile the different accounts already mentioned, whoſe inconſiſtency is not real, but apparent only. SIMON was, by birth, a Samaritan, or a Jew: when he had ſtudied philoſophy at *Alexandria* [x], he made a public profeſſion of magic, (which was nothing very uncommon at that time,) and perſuaded the Samaritans, by fictitious miracles, that he had received from God the power of commanding and reſtraining thoſe evil beings by which mankind were tormented [y]. Having ſeen the miracles which PHILIP wrought, by a divine power, he joined himſelf to this apoſtle, and embraced the doctrine of CHRIST, but with no other deſign than to receive the power of working miracles, in order to promote a low intereſt, and to preſerve and increaſe his impious authority over the minds of men. Then St. PETER pointed out to him ſolemnly the impiety of his intentions, and the vanity of his hopes, in that ſevere diſcourſe recorded in the VIIIth chapter of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*; then the vile impoſtor not only returned to his former ways by an entire defection from the Chriſtians, but alſo oppoſed, wherever he came, the progreſs of the goſpel, and even travelled into different countries with that odious deſign. Many things are recorded of this impoſtor, of his tragical end, and of the ſtatue erected to him at *Rome*, which the greateſt part of the learned reject as fabulous. They are at leaſt uncertain, and deſtitute of all probability [z].

XIII.

[x] *Clementina Homil.* ii. p. 633. tom. ii. *PP. Apoſt.*

[y] Acts viii. 9, 10.

[z] See BEAUSOBRE, *Hiſtoire des Manich.* p. 203. 395. Van DALE's diſſertation, *De Statua Simonis*, ſubjoined to his diſcourſe concerning the ancient oracles. DEYLINGIUS, *Obſervat. Sacr.* lib. i. *Obſerv.* xxxvi. p. 140. TILLEMONT, *Memoires pour ſervir à l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, tom. i. p. 340. ☞ The circumſtances of SIMON's tragical end, *viz.* his having pretended to fly, by a miraculous power, in order to pleaſe the emperor

CENT. I. PART II.

and doctrines.

XIII. It is beyond all doubt, that SIMON was in the claſs of thoſe philoſophers, who not only maintained the eternity of *matter*, but alſo the exiſtence of an *evil being*, who preſided, and thus ſhared, the empire of the univerſe, with the ſupreme and beneficent *Mind*. And as there was a good deal of variety in the ſentiments of the different members of this ſect, it is more than probable that SIMON embraced the opinion of thoſe who held, that matter, moved, from eternity, by an intrinſic and neceſſary activity, had, by its innate forces, produced, at a certain period of time, from its own ſubſtance, the *evil principle* which now exerciſes dominion over it, with all his numerous train of attendants. From this pernicious doctrine, the other errors attributed to him concerning *fate*, *the indifference of human actions*, *the impurity of the human body*, *the power of magic*, and ſuch like extravagancies, flow naturally as from their true and genuine ſource [*a*]. But this odious magician ſtill proceeded to more ſhocking degrees of enormity in his monſtrous fictions; for he pretended, that in his perſon reſided the greateſt and

emperor NERO, who was fond of magic; his falling to the ground, and breaking his limbs, in conſequence of the prayers of St. PETER and St. PAUL; and his putting himſelf to death, through ſhame and deſpair, to have been thus defeated by the ſuperior power of the apoſtles; all theſe romantic fictions have derived their credit from a ſet of eccleſiaſtical writers, who, on many occaſions, prefer the *marvellous* to the *truth*, as favourable to a ſyſtem of religion, or rather ſuperſtition, which truth and reaſon loudly diſown.

[*a*] The diſſertation of HORBIUS, concerning SIMON the magician, which was publiſhed not long ago, in the *Biblioth. Hæreſiologica* of VOIGTIUS, tom. i. par. III. p. 511. ſeems preferable to any thing elſe upon that ſubject, though it be a juvenile performance, and not ſufficiently finiſhed He follows the ſteps of his maſter THOMASIUS, who, with admirable penetration, diſcovered the true ſource of that multitude of errors, with which the Gnoſtics, and particularly SIMON, were ſo diſmally polluted. VOIGTIUS, in the place above cited, p. 567. gives a liſt of the other authors who have made any mention of this impoſtor.

moſt powerful of the divine *æons*; that another *æon* of the female ſex, the mother of all human ſouls, dwelt in the perſon of his miſtreſs HELENA [*b*], and that he came, by the command of God, upon earth, to aboliſh the empire of thoſe that had formed this material world, and to deliver HELENA from their power and dominion.

Menander.

XIV. Another wrong-headed teacher, named MENANDER, a Samaritan alſo by birth, appeared in this century. He is ſaid to have been inſtructed by SIMON; though this opinion has no other foundation, than the general notion, that all the various ſects of the Gnoſtics derived their origin from that magician; and this notion is entirely groundleſs. Be that as it will, MENANDER ſhould rather be ranked with the lunatics than with the heretics of antiquity, ſeeing he alſo took it into his head to exhibit himſelf to the world as the promiſed Saviour. For it appears, by the teſtimonies of IRENÆUS, JUSTIN, and TERTULLIAN, that he pretended to be one of the *æons* ſent from the *pleroma*, or celeſtial regions, to ſuccour the ſouls that lay groaning under bodily oppreſſion and ſervitude, and to maintain them againſt the violence and ſtratagems of the *dæmons* that hold the reins of empire in this ſublunary world. As this doctrine was built upon the ſame foundation with that of SIMON MAGUS, therefore the ancient writers looked upon him as the inſtructor of MENANDER.

Nicolaitans.

XV. If then we ſeparate theſe three perſons, now ſucceſſively mentioned, from the heretics of the firſt century, we may rank among the chief of the Chriſtian ſectaries, and particularly of thoſe

[*b*] Some very learned men have given an allegorical explication of what the ancient writers ſay concerning HELENA the miſtreſs of this magician, and imagine that by the name HELENA is ſignified either *matter*, or *ſpirit*. But nothing is more eaſy than to ſhew upon what ſlight foundations this opinion is built.

that

CENT. I. PART II.

that bear the general name of Gnoſtics, the Nicolaitans, whom CHRIST himſelf mentions with abhorrence, by the mouth of his apoſtle [*c*]. It is true, indeed, that the divine Saviour does not reproach them with erroneous opinions concerning the deity, but with the licentiouſneſs of their practice, and the contempt of that ſolemn law which the apoſtles had enacted (Acts xv. 29.) againſt fornication, and the uſe of *meats* offered to idols. It is however certain, that the writers of the ſecond and the following centuries, IRENÆUS, TERTULLIAN, CLEMENS, and others, affirm, that the Nicolaitans adopted the ſentiments of the Gnoſtics, concerning the *two principles* of all things, the *æons*, and the origin of this terreſtrial globe. The authority of theſe writers would be entirely ſatisfactory in this matter, were there not ſome reaſon to imagine, that they confounded, in their narrations, two ſects very different from each other; that of the Nicolaitans, mentioned in the Revelations; and another founded, by a certain NICOLAUS, in the ſecond century, upon the principles of the Gnoſtics. But this is a matter of too doubtful a nature to juſtify a poſitive deciſion on either ſide.

Cerinthus and the Cerinthians.

XVI. There is no ſort of doubt, but that CERINTHUS may be placed with propriety among the Gnoſtics, though the learned are not entirely agreed whether he belongs to the heretics of the firſt or the ſecond century [*d*]. This man was by birth a Jew, and having applied himſelf to letters and philoſophy at *Alexandria* [*e*], attempted, at length, to form a new and ſingular ſyſtem of doc-

[*c*] Rev. ii. 6. 14, 15.

[*d*] See SAM. BASNAGE, *Annal. Polit. Eccleſ.* tom. ii. p. 6. FAYDIT, *Eclairciſſemens ſur l'Hiſtoire Eccleſ. des deux premiers Siecles*, cap. v. p. 64. The opinion of theſe two learned men is oppoſed by BUDDEUS, *De Eccleſ. Apoſtolica*, cap. v. p. 412.

[*e*] THEODORET. *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. ii. cap. iii. p. 219. tom. iii. opp.

trine and diſcipline by a monſtrous combination of the doctrines of CHRIST, with the opinions and errors of the Jews and Gnoſtics. From the latter he borrowed their *pleroma*, their *æons*, their *demiurge*, &c. and ſo modified and tempered theſe fictions, as to give them an air of Judaiſm, which muſt have conſiderably favoured the progreſs of his hereſy. He taught "that the creator of this "world, whom he conſidered alſo as the ſove- "reign and lawgiver of the Jewiſh people, was "a *being* endowed with the greateſt virtues, and "derived his birth from the *Supreme God*; that "this *being* fell, by degrees, from his native vir- "tue, and his primitive dignity; that the *Supreme* "*God*, in conſequence of this, determined to de- "ſtroy his empire, and ſent upon earth, for this "purpoſe, one of the ever-happy and glorious "*æons*, whoſe name was CHRIST; that this CHRIST "choſe for his habitation the perſon of JESUS, a "man of the moſt illuſtrious ſanctity and juſtice, "the ſon of JOSEPH and MARY, and, deſcending "in the form of a *dove*, entered into him, while "he was receiving the baptiſm of JOHN in the "waters of *Jordan*; that JESUS, after his union "with CHRIST, oppoſed himſelf with vigour to "the *God of the Jews*, and was, by his inſtigation, "ſeized and crucified by the Hebrew chiefs; that "when JESUS was taken captive, CHRIST aſcend- "ed up on high, ſo that the man JESUS alone was "ſubjected to the pains of an ignominious death." CERINTHUS required of his followers, that they ſhould worſhip the father of CHRIST, even the Supreme God, in conjunction with the ſon; that they ſhould abandon the lawgiver of the Jews; whom he looked upon as the creator of the world; that they ſhould retain a part of the law given by MOSES, but ſhould, nevertheleſs, employ their principal attention and care to regulate their lives by the precepts of CHRIST. To encourage them

CENT. I. PART II.

CENT. I. PART II.

to this, he promiſed them the reſurrection of this mortal body, after which was to commence a ſcene of the moſt exquiſite delights, during CHRIST's earthly reign of a thouſand years, which was to be ſucceeded by an happy and never ending life in the celeſtial world. For CERINTHUS held, that CHRIST will one day return upon earth, and, renewing his former union with the man JESUS, will reign with his people in the land of *Paleſtine* during a thouſand years.

The Nazarines and Ebionites properly belong to the ſecond century.

XVII. It has been already obſerved, that the church was troubled with early diſputes concerning the law of MOSES, and the Jewiſh rites. Thoſe, however, who conſidered the obſervance of the Moſaic rites as neceſſary to ſalvation, had not, in this firſt century, proceeded ſo far as to break off all communion with ſuch as differed from them in this matter. Therefore they were ſtill regarded as brethren, though of the weaker ſort. But when, after the ſecond deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, under the emperor ADRIAN, theſe zealots for the Jewiſh rites deſerted the ordinary aſſemblies of Chriſtians, and eſtabliſhed ſeparate meetings among themſelves, then they were numbered with thoſe ſects who had departed from the pure doctrine of CHRIST. Hence the name Nazarenes and Ebionites, by which the judaizing Chriſtians were diſtinguiſhed from thoſe who looked upon the Moſaic worſhip and ceremonies as entirely aboliſhed by the appearance of CHRIST upon earth. We ſhall only obſerve further under this head, that though the Nazarenes and Ebionites are generally placed among the ſects of the apoſtolic age, yet they really belong to the ſecond century, which was the earlieſt period of their exiſtence as a ſect.

# THE SECOND CENTURY.

## PART I.

## The External HISTORY of the CHURCH.

### CHAPTER I.

*Concerning the proſperous events that happened to the church during this century.*



The ſtate of the republic.

I. IN this century the Roman ſceptre was, for the moſt part, ſwayed by princes of a mild and moderate turn. TRAJAN, though too eagerly bent upon the purſuit of glory, and not always ſufficiently attentive to his conduct, nor prudent in his meaſures, was nevertheleſs endowed with many virtues, and the predominant lines of his character were clemency and benevolence. ADRIAN was of a more harſh and untractable temper; yet very far from deſerving the reputation of a wicked or unjuſt prince. He was of a mixed character, chargeable with ſeveral vices, and eſtimable on account of many excellent qualities. The ANTONINES were illuſtrious models of humanity, goodneſs, and ſublime virtue. SEVERUS himſelf, in whoſe character and diſpoſition ſuch an unexpected and diſadvantageous change was effected, was, in the beginning of his reign, unjuſt towards none, and even the Chriſtians were treated by him with equity and mildneſs.

CENT. II. PART I.

The progress of Christianity in the Roman empire.

II. This lenity of the emperors was singularly advantageous to those Christians who lived under the Roman sceptre; it suspended sometimes their sufferings, and alleviated the burthen of their distresses. For, though edicts of a severe nature were issued out against them, and the magistrates, animated by the priests and by the multitude, shed their blood with a cruelty which frequently exceeded even the dictates of the most barbarous laws; yet there was always some remedy that accompanied these evils, and softened their severity. TRAJAN, however condemnable in other respects, on account of his conduct towards the Christians, was yet engaged, by the representations that PLINY the younger gave of them, to forbid all *search to be made after them.* He also prohibited all anonymous libels and accusations, by which the Christians had so often been perfidiously exposed to the greatest sufferings [*a*]. ANTONINUS PIUS went so far as to enact penal laws against their accusers [*b*]. And others, by various acts of beneficence and compassion, defended them from the injurious treatment of the priests and people. Hence it came to pass, that in this century the limits of the church were considerably enlarged, and the number of converts to Christianity prodigiously augmented. Of the truth of this, we have the most respectable and authentic testimonies in the writings of the ancients; testimonies, whose evidence and authority are every way superior to the vain attempts which some have made to obscure and weaken them [*c*].

III. It

[*a*] See PLINY's epistles, book x. let. xcviii.

[*b*] EUSEBIUS, *Eccl. Histor.* lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 126.

[*c*] See MOYLE's letters concerning the thundering legion, with the remarks which Dr. MOSHEIM has annexed to his Latin translation of them, published at the end of a work, entitled, *Syntagma Dissert. ad Sanctiores Disciplinas pertinent.*

See

III. It is not eaſy to point out particularly the different countries on which the light of celeſtial truth firſt roſe in this age. The ancient records that yet remain, do not give us information ſufficient to determine that matter with certainty; nor is it, indeed, a matter of much importance. We are, however, aſſured by the moſt unexceptionable teſtimonies, that CHRIST was worſhipped as God, almoſt throughout the whole Eaſt, as alſo among the Germans, Spaniards, Celts, Britons, and many other nations [*d*]; but which of them received the goſpel in the firſt century, and which in the ſecond, is a queſtion unanſwerable at this diſtance of time. PANTÆNUS, the head of the Alexandrian ſchool, is ſaid to have conveyed to the Indians the knowledge of CHRIST [*e*]. But, after an attentive examination of the account which EUSEBIUS gives of this matter, it will appear, that theſe Indians were certain Jews, inhabitants of the *Happy Arabia*, whom BARTHOLOMEW the apoſtle had before inſtructed in the doctrines of Chriſtianity. For, according to the account of St. JEROM, PANTÆNUS found among this people the goſpel of St. MATTHEW, which they had received from BARTHOLOMEW their firſt teacher.

What countries were enlightened with the goſpel.

IV. The Chriſtian religion, having penetrated among the Gauls, ſeems to have paſſed from thence into that part of Germany which was ſubject to the Romans, and from thence into Britain [*f*]. Certain German churches, indeed, are

The converſion of the Germans.

See alſo the dialogue between JUSTIN MARTYR and TRYPHO the Jew, p. 341.

[*d*] IRENÆUS *contr. Hæreſ.* lib. i. cap. x. TERTULLIAN *adv. Judæos*, cap. vii. p. 212.

[*e*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* book v. c. x. JEROME *Catal. Scriptor. Eccleſ.* c. xxxvi.

[*f*] URSINUS, BEBELIUS, and others, have written learnedly concerning the origin of the German churches, which TERTULLIAN

CENT. II. PART I.

are fondly ambitious of deriving their origin from St. PETER, and from the companions of the other apoſtles. The Britons alſo are willing to believe, upon the authority of BEDE, that, in this century, and under the reign of MARCUS ANTONINUS, their king LUCIUS addreſſed himſelf to ELEUTHERUS the Roman Pontif, for doctors to inſtruct him in the Chriſtian religion, and having obtained his requeſt, embraced the goſpel [*g*]. But, after all, theſe traditions are extremely doubtful, and are, indeed, rejected by ſuch as have learning ſufficient to weigh the credibility of ancient narrations.

Converſion of the Gauls.

V. It is very poſſible that the light of Chriſtianity may have reached *Tranſalpine Gaul*, now called *France*, before the concluſion of the apoſtolic age, either by the miniſtry of the apoſtles themſelves, or their immediate ſucceſſors. But we have no records, that mention, with certainty, the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtian churches in this part of *Europe* before the ſecond century. POTHINUS, a man of exemplary piety and zeal, ſet out from *Aſia* in company with IRENÆUS and others, and laboured in the Chriſtian cauſe with ſuch ſucceſs among the Gauls, that churches were eſtabliſhed at *Lyons* and *Vienne*, of which POTHINUS himſelf was the firſt biſhop [*b*].

VI. The

TULLIAN and IRENÆUS mention as erected in this century. Add to theſe, the ample illuſtrations of this ſubject, which are to be found in LIRON's *Singularités Hiſtor. et Liter.* tom. iv. p. 193. The celebrated DOM. CALMET has judiciouſly refuted the common and popular accounts of the firſt Chriſtian Doctors in Germany, in his *Hiſt. de la Lorraine*, tom. i. *Diſſ. ſur les Evêques de Treves*, par. III, IV. See alſo BOLLANDUS, *Act. Sanctor.* p. 922. HONTHEIM *Diſſ. de Æra Epiſcop. Trevir.* tom. i. *Hiſt. Trevir.*

[*g*] See USHER *Antiq. Eccleſ. Britann.* cap. i. p. 7; as alſo GODWIN, *De converſione Britan.* cap. i. p. 7. and RAPIN's *Hiſtory of England.*

[*b*] See the epiſtle of PETRUS DE MARCA, concerning the firſt riſe of Chriſtianity in *France*, publiſhed among the diſſertations

Translations of the New Testament.

VI. The writers of this century attribute this rapid progress of Christianity to the power of God, to the energy of divine truth, to the extraordinary gifts, which were imparted to the first Christians, and the miracles and prodigies that were wrought in their behalf and at their command; nor do they ascribe almost any part of the amazing success, that attended the preaching of the gospel, to the intervening succours of human means, or second causes. But this is carrying the matter too far. The wisdom of human counsels, and the useful efforts of learning and prudence, are too inconsiderately excluded from this account of things. For it is beyond all doubt, that the pious diligence and zeal, with which many learned and worthy men recommended the sacred writings, and spread them abroad in translations, which rendered them useful to those who were ignorant of the language in which they were written, contributed much to the success and propagation of the Christian doctrine. Latin versions of these sacred books were multiplied by the pious labours of the learned with particular diligence, because that language was now more universal than any other [*i*]. Among these versions, that which was distinguished by the name of the Italic obtained universally the preference, and was followed by the Syriac, Egyptian, and Æthiopic versions, whose dates it is impossible to fix with certainty [*k*].

sertations of that author; and also by VALESIUS, in his edition of EUSEBIUS's *Ecclesiastical History*. See also *Histoire Literaire de la France*, tom. i. p. 223. LIRON's *Singularités Histor. et Literaires*, vol. iv.

[*i*] See AUGUSTIN. *De doctrina Christiana*, lib. ii. cap. xi. p. 85. edit. Calixt.

[*k*] See Jo. GOTTLOB. CARPZOV. *Critica sacra Vet. Test.* p. 663.

CENT. II. PART I.

Chriſtians defended, and heretics refuted.

VII. Among the obſtacles that retarded the progreſs of Chriſtianity, the impious calumnies of its enemies were the moſt conſiderable. The perſons, the characters, and religious ſentiments of the firſt Chriſtians were moſt unjuſtly treated, and moſt perfidiouſly miſrepreſented to the credulous multitude [*l*], who were reſtrained by this only from embracing the goſpel. Thoſe therefore, who, by their *apologetic* writings in favour of the Chriſtians, deſtroyed the poiſonous influence of detraction, rendered, no doubt, ſignal ſervice to the doctrine of CHRIST, by removing the chief impediment that retarded its progreſs. Nor were the writings of ſuch as combated with ſucceſs the ancient Heretics without their uſe, eſpecially in the early periods of the church. For the inſipid and extravagant doctrines of theſe ſectaries, and the groſs immoralities with which they were chargeable, were extremely prejudicial to the Chriſtian religion, by diſguſting many at whatever carried the Chriſtian name. But when it was known, by the writings of thoſe who defended Chriſtianity, that theſe corrupt heretics were held in averſion, inſtead of being patronized by the true followers of CHRIST, then, the clouds that were caſt over the religion of JESUS were diſperſed, and the

☞ [*l*] Nothing more injurious can be conceived than the terms of contempt, indignation, and reproach, which the Heathens employed in expreſſing their hatred againſt the Chriſtians, who were called by them *atheiſts*, becauſe they derided the heathen polytheiſm; *magicians*, becauſe they wrought miracles; *ſelf-murderers*, becauſe they ſuffered martyrdom chearfully for the truth; *haters of the light*, becauſe, to avoid the fury of the perſecutions raiſed againſt them, they were forced, at firſt, to hold their religious aſſemblies in the night: with a multitude of other ignominious epithets employed againſt them by TACITUS, SUETONIUS, CELSUS, &c. See BINGHAM's *Antiquities of the Chriſtian Church*, book i. chap. ii. p. 5.

prejudices

prejudices that had been raiſed againſt it were fully removed.

Miracles and extraordinary gifts.

VIII. It is eaſier to conceive than to expreſs, how much, the *miraculous powers* and *extraordinary gifts*, which were diſplayed in the miniſtry of the firſt heralds of the goſpel, contributed to enlarge the bounds of the church. Theſe gifts, however, which were given for wiſe and important reaſons, began gradually to diminiſh in proportion as the reaſons ceaſed for which they were conferred. And accordingly when almoſt all nations were enlightened with the truth, and the number of Chriſtian churches increaſed daily in all places, then the miraculous gift of tongues began gradually to decreaſe. It appears, at the ſame time, from unexceptionable teſtimonies, that the other extraordinary gifts with which the omnipotence and wiſdom of the Moſt High had ſo richly endowed the riſing church, were in ſeveral places continued during this century [*m*].

The miracle of the thundering legion.

IX. We cannot indeed place, with any degree of certainty, among the effects of a miraculous power yet remaining in the church, the ſtory of the *Chriſtian legion*, who, by their prayers, drew from heaven a refreſhing ſhower upon the army of MARCUS ANTONINUS, ready to periſh with thirſt, when that emperor was at war with the Marcomanni. This remarkable event (which gave to the Chriſtians, to whom it was attributed, the name of the *thundering legion*, on account of the thunder and lightning that deſtroyed the enemy, while the ſhower revived the fainting Romans) has been mentioned by many writers. But whether it was really miraculous or not, has been much diſputed among learned men. Some

[*m*] PFANNER, *De donis miraculoſis.* SPENCER, *Not. ad Orig. contra Celſum*, p. 5, 6. MAMMACHIUS, *Originum et Antiquitat. Chriſtianar.* tom. i. p. 363, &c.

think

think that the Chriſtians, by a pious ſort of miſtake, attributed this unexpected and ſeaſonable ſhower, which ſaved the Roman army, to a miraculous interpoſition; and this opinion is indeed ſupported by the weightieſt reaſons, as well as by the moſt reſpectable authorities [*n*].

More than dubious.

X. Let us diſtinguiſh what is doubtful in this ſtory, from that which is certain. It is certain, that the Roman army, encloſed by the enemy, and reduced to the moſt deplorable and even deſperate condition by the thirſt under which they languiſhed in a parched deſert, was revived by a ſudden and unexpected rain. It is alſo certain, that both the Heathens and the Chriſtians looked upon this event as extraordinary and miraculous; the former attributing it to JUPITER, MERCURY, or the power of magic; the latter to CHRIST, interpoſing, thus unexpectedly, in conſequence of their prayers. It is ſtill fur-

[*n*] Such readers as are deſirous to know what learned men have alleged on both ſides of this curious queſtion, may conſult WITSIUS's *Diſſertat. de Legione Fulminatrice*, which is ſubjoined to his *Ægyptiaca*, in defence of this miracle; as alſo what is alleged againſt it by DAN. LARROQUE, in a diſcourſe upon that ſubject, ſubjoined to the *Adverſaria Sacra* of MATTH. LARROQUE, his father. But above all, the controverſy between Sir PETER KING * and Mr. WALTER MOYLE upon this ſubject, is worthy of the attention of the curious; and likewiſe the diſſertation of the learned JABLONSKI, inſerted in the eighth volume of the *Miſcellanea Leipſienſia*, p. 417. under the title of *Spicilegium de Legione Fulminatrice*. This laſt-mentioned author inveſtigates, with great acuteneſs, the reaſons and motives which induced the Chriſtians to place ſo inconſiderately this *ſhower* in the liſt of miracles.

☞ [*] It is by miſtake that Dr. MOSHEIM confounds Sir PETER KING, lord chancellor of *England*, with the perſon who carried on the controverſy with MOYLE concerning the *thundering legion*. MOYLE's adverſary was Mr. KING, a clergyman, rector of *Topſham*, near *Exeter*, which was the place of his nativity, and alſo of the famous chancellor's, who bore his name. See the *Letters* addreſſed to the Reverend Mr. KING, in the *Poſthumous Collection of* LOCKE's *Letters*, publiſhed by COLLINS. See alſo LARDNER's *Collection of Heathen and Jewiſh Teſtimonies*, &c. vol. ii. p. 249, &c.

ther

ther beyond all doubt, that a conſiderable number of Chriſtians ſerved, at this time, in the Roman army, and it is extremely probable, that in ſuch trying circumſtances of calamity and diſtreſs, they implored the merciful interpoſition and ſuccours of their God and Saviour. And as the Chriſtians of theſe times looked upon all extraordinary events as miracles, and aſcribed to their prayers all the uncommon and ſingular occurrences of an advantageous nature that happened to the Roman empire, it will not appear ſurpriſing, that, upon the preſent occaſion, they attributed the deliverance of ANTONINUS and his army to a miraculous interpoſition which they had obtained from above. But, on the other hand, it muſt be carefully obſerved, that it is an invariable maxim, univerſally adopted by the wiſe and judicious, that no events are to be eſteemed miraculous, which may be rationally attributed to natural cauſes, and accounted for by a recourſe to the ordinary diſpenſations of Providence; and as the unexpected ſhower, which reſtored the expiring force of the Romans, may be eaſily explained without riſing beyond the uſual and ordinary courſe of nature, the concluſion is manifeſt; nor can it be doubtful in what light we are to conſider that remarkable event.

Sedition and ſlaughter of the Jews.

XI. The Jews were viſited with new calamities, firſt under TRAJAN, and then under ADRIAN, when under the ſtandards of BARCOCHEBA, who gave himſelf out for the MESSIAH, they roſe in rebellion againſt the Romans. In conſequence of this ſedition, prodigious numbers of that miſerable people were put to the ſword, and a new city, called *Elia Capitolina*, was raiſed upon the ruins of *Jeruſalem*, into which no Jew was permitted to enter [o]. This defeat of the Jews

[o] JUSTIN MART. *Dial. cum* TRYPHONE, p. 49. 278.

tended

CENT. II. PART I.

tended to confirm, in ſome meaſure, the external tranquillity of the Chriſtian church. For that turbulent and perfidious nation had hitherto oppreſſed and vexed the Chriſtians, not only by preſenting every where to the Roman magiſtrates complaints and accuſations againſt them, but alſo by treating them in the moſt injurious manner in *Paleſtine*, and the neighbouring countries, becauſe they refuſed to ſuccour them againſt the Romans. But this new calamity, which fell upon that ſeditious nation, put it out of their power to exerciſe their malignity againſt the diſciples of JESUS, as they had formerly done.

Philoſophers converted to Chriſtianity.

XII. Among other acceſſions to the ſplendor and force of the growing church, we may reckon the learned and ingenious labours of thoſe philoſophers and literati, who were converted to Chriſtianity in this century. I am ſenſible that the advantages ariſing from hence to the cauſe of true religion will be diſputed by many; and, indeed, when the queſtion is thus propoſed, whether, upon the whole, the intereſts of Chriſtianity have gained or loſt by the writings of the learned, and the ſpeculations of philoſophers, that have been employed in its defence, I confeſs myſelf incapable of ſolving it in a ſatisfactory manner. For nothing is more manifeſt than this truth, that the noble ſimplicity and dignity of religion were ſadly corrupted in many places, when the philoſophers blended their opinions with its pure doctrines, and were audacious enough to ſubmit that divine ſyſtem of faith and piety to be ſcrutinized and modified by the fallible rule of imperfect reaſon.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

*Concerning the calamitous events which happened to the church in this century.*

I. IN the beginning of this century, there were no laws in force againſt the Chriſtians, for the ſenate had annulled the cruel edicts of NERO, and NERVA had abrogated the ſanguinary laws of his predeceſſor DOMITIAN. But, notwithſtanding this, a horrid cuſtom prevailed of perſecuting the Chriſtians, and even of putting them to death, as often as a bloody prieſthood, or an outrageous populace, ſet on by them, demanded their deſtruction. Hence it happened, that, even under the reign of the good TRAJAN, popular clamours [p] were raiſed againſt the Chriſtians, many of whom fell victims to the rage of a mercileſs multitude. Such were the riotous proceedings that happened in *Bithynia*, under the adminiſtration of PLINY the younger, who, upon that occaſion, wrote to the emperor, to know in what manner he was to conduct himſelf towards the Chriſtians. The anſwer which he received from TRAJAN amounted to this, "That the Chriſtians "were not to be *officiouſly ſought after* [q], but "that ſuch as were *accuſed* and *convicted of an ad-* "*herence to Chriſtianity* were to be put to death, "as wicked citizens, if they did not return to the "religion of their anceſtors." CENT. II. PART I. The perſecution under Trajan.

II. This edict of TRAJAN, being regiſtered among the public and ſolemn laws of the Roman empire, ſet bounds, indeed, to the fury of thoſe that perſecuted the Chriſtians, but was, however, The effects of Trajan's order to Pliny.

[p] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 103.

[q] See PLINY's letters, book x. lett. xcvii. and xcviii. which have been illuſtrated by many learned men, ſuch as VOSSIUS, BÖHMER, BALDWIN, HEUMAN, and others.

CENT. II. PART I.

the occaſion of martyrdom to many even under the beſt emperors. For, as often as an accuſer appeared, and the perſon accuſed of an adherence to Chriſtianity confeſſed the truth of the charge, the only alternative then, was apoſtaſy or death, ſince a magnanimous perſeverance in the Chriſtian faith was, according to the edict of TRAJAN, a capital crime. And accordingly the venerable and aged SIMEON, ſon of CLEOPAS, and biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, was, by this very law, crucified in conſequence of an accuſation formed againſt him by the Jews [*r*]. By the ſame law alſo was the great and pious IGNATIUS, biſhop of *Antioch*, ordered by TRAJAN himſelf to expire in the Roman theatre, expoſed to the rapacity of furious beaſts [*s*]; for as the law denounced ſimply death to ſuch as were convicted of an attachment to CHRIST, the kind of puniſhment was left by the legiſlator to the choice of the judge.

Perſecution under Adrian.

III. Such of the Chriſtians as could conceal their profeſſion were indeed ſheltered under the law of TRAJAN, which was, therefore, a diſagreeable reſtraint upon the Heathen prieſts, who breathed nothing but fury againſt the diſciples of JESUS. The office of an accuſer was alſo become dangerous, and very few were diſpoſed to undertake it, ſo that the ſacerdotal craft was now inventing new methods to oppreſs the Chriſtians. The law of TRAJAN was, therefore, artfully evaded under the reign of his ſucceſſor ADRIAN. The populace, ſet in motion by their prieſts, demanded of their magiſtrates, with one voice, during the public games, the deſtruction of the Chriſtians: and the magiſtrates, fearing that a ſedition might be the conſequence of deſpiſing or

[*r*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 103.

[*s*] See the *Acta Martyrii Ignatiani*, publiſhed by RUINART, and alſo in the Collection of the *Apoſtolic Fathers*.

oppoſing

oppoſing theſe popular clamours, were too much diſpoſed to indulge them in their requeſt. During theſe commotions, SERENUS GRANIANUS, proconſul of *Aſia*, repreſented to the emperor how barbarous and unjuſt it was to ſacrifice to the fury of a lawleſs multitude, perſons who had been convicted of no crime. Nor was his wiſe and equitable remonſtrance without effect; for ADRIAN, by an edict iſſued out to theſe magiſtrates, prohibited the putting the Chriſtians to death, unleſs they were regularly accuſed and convicted of crimes committed againſt the laws; and this edict appears to have been a ſolemn renewal of the law of TRAJAN [*t*]. The moderation of the emperor, in this edict, may, perhaps, have been owing to the admirable *apologies* of QUADRATUS and ARISTIDES, in favour of the Chriſtians, which were every way proper to diſpel the angry prejudices of a mind that had any ſenſe of equity and humanity left. But it was not from the Romans alone, that the diſciples of CHRIST were to feel oppreſſion: BARCOCHEBAS, the fictitious king of the Jews, whom ADRIAN afterwards defeated, vented againſt them all his fury, becauſe they refuſed to join his ſtandards, and ſecond his rebellion [*u*].

The perſecution under Antoninus Pius.

IV. The law of ADRIAN, according to its natural ſenſe, ſeemed to cover the Chriſtians from the fury of their enemies, ſince it rendered them puniſhable on no other account than the *commiſſion of crimes*, and ſince the magiſtrates refuſed to interpret their religion as the *crime* mentioned in the imperial edict. Therefore their enemies invented a new method of attacking them, under the reign of ANTONINUS PIUS, even by accuſing them of impiety and atheiſm. This calumny was refuted

[*t*] Compare EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. ix. with BALDUINUS *ad Edicta Princip. in Chriſtianos*, p. 73.

[*u*] JUSTIN MART. *Apologia ſecunda*, p. 72. edit. Colon.

in

CENT. II. PART I.

in an *apology* for the Chriſtians, preſented to the emperor by JUSTIN MARTYR, in conſequence of which this equitable prince ordered, that all proceedings againſt them ſhould be regulated by the law of ADRIAN [*w*]. This, however, was not ſufficient to ſuppreſs the rage of blood-thirſty perſecution; for, ſome time after this, on occaſion of ſome earthquakes which happened in *Aſia*, the people renewed their violence againſt the Chriſtians, whom they conſidered as the authors of thoſe calamities, and treated conſequently in the moſt cruel and injurious manner. The emperor, informed of theſe unjuſt and barbarous proceedings, addreſſed an edict to the whole province of *Aſia*, in which he denounced capital puniſhment againſt ſuch as ſhould, for the future, accuſe the Chriſtians, without being able to prove them guilty of any crime [*x*].

The perſecution under Marcus Antoninus.

V. This worthy prince was ſucceeded by MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS the philoſopher, whom moſt writers have celebrated beyond meaſure on account of his extraordinary wiſdom and virtue. It is not, however, in his conduct towards the Chriſtians, that we muſt look for the reaſons of theſe pompous encomiums; for here, the clemency and juſtice of that emperor ſuffer a ſtrange

[*w*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 148.

[*x*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 126. ☞ It is proper to be obſerved, that the word *crime*, in ſeveral former edicts, had not been ſufficiently determined in its ſignification; ſo that we find the enemies of the Chriſtians, and even the Roman magiſtrates, applying this term to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. But the equitable edict of this good emperor, decided that point on the ſide of humanity and juſtice, as appears from the letter he addreſſed to the province of *Aſia*, in favour of the perſecuted Chriſtians, and which concludes with the following words: "If any one, for the "future, ſhall moleſt the Chriſtians, and accuſe them merely "on account of their religion, let the perſon thus accuſed be "diſcharged, though he is found to be a Chriſtian, and the "accuſer be puniſhed according to the rigour of the law."

eclipſe.

eclipſe. He did not, indeed, revoke the edict of ANTONINUS PIUS, or abrogate the laws which the preceding emperors had enacted in favour of the Chriſtians; but he did what was equally pernicious to them. Without examining impartially their cauſe, he lent an eaſy and attentive ear to all the moſt virulent inſinuations of their enemies, and more eſpecially to the malignant calumnies of the philoſophers, who accuſed them of the moſt horrid crimes and the moſt monſtrous impiety, and charged them with renewing the ſhocking feaſt of Thyeſtes, and the inceſtuous amours of the Theban prince. So that, if we except that of NERO, there was no reign under which the Chriſtians were more injuriouſly and cruelly treated, than under that of the wiſe and virtuous MARCUS AURELIUS; and yet there was no reign under which ſuch numerous and victorious *apologies* were publiſhed in their behalf. Thoſe which JUSTIN MARTYR, ATHENAGORAS, and TATIAN drew up, upon this occaſion, are ſtill extant.

The calamities ſuffered by the Chriſtians under him.

VI. This emperor iſſued out againſt the Chriſtians, whom he regarded as a vain, obſtinate, and vicious ſet of men, edicts [*y*], which, upon the whole, were very unjuſt; though we do not know, at this diſtance of time, their particular contents. In conſequence of theſe imperial edicts, the judges and magiſtrates received the accuſations, which even ſlaves, and the vileſt of the perjured rabble, brought againſt the followers of JESUS. And the Chriſtians were put to the moſt cruel tortures, and were condemned to meet death in the moſt barbarous forms, notwithſtanding their perfect innocence, and their perſevering and ſolemn denial of the horrid crimes laid to their charge. The imperial edicts were ſo poſitive and expreſs againſt

[*y*] See MELITO *ap.* EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 147.

CENT. II. PART I.

inflicting puniſhment upon ſuch of the Chriſtians as were guilty of no crime, that the corrupt judges, who, through motives of intereſt or popularity, deſired their deſtruction, were obliged to ſuborn falſe accuſers to charge them with actions that might bring them within the reach of the laws. Hence many fell victims to cruel ſuperſtition and popular fury, ſeconded by the corruption of a wicked magiſtracy, and the connivance of a prince, who, with reſpect to one ſet of men, forgot the principles of juſtice and clemency which directed his conduct towards all others. Among theſe victims, there were many men of illuſtrious piety, and ſome of eminent learning and abilities, ſuch as the holy and venerable POLYCARP, biſhop of *Smyrna*, and JUSTIN MARTYR, ſo deſervedly renowned for his erudition and philoſophy [*z*]. Many churches, particularly thoſe of *Lyons* and *Vienne*, were almoſt entirely deſtroyed, during this violent perſecution, which raged in the year 177, and will be an indelible ſtain upon the memory of the prince by whoſe order it was carried on [*a*].

Their ſtate under Commodus and Severus.

VII. During the reign of COMMODUS, the Chriſtians ſuffered very little; no general perſecution raged againſt them; and any cruelties they endured were confined to a ſmall number, who had newly abandoned the Pagan ſuperſtitions [*b*]. But the ſcene changed towards the latter end of this century, when SEVERUS was declared emperor. Then *Aſia*, *Egypt*, and the other provinces, were died with the blood of martyrs, as appears

[*z*] A full account of their martyrdom is to be found in the valuable work of RUINART, intitled, *Acta Sincera Martyrum*.

[*a*] See the letter of the Chriſtians at *Lyons*, concerning this perſecution, which is to be found in EUSEBIUS's *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, book v. ch. ii. as alſo in FOX's *Martyrology*, vol. i.

[*b*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 191. cap. xvi. p. 183. cap. xviii. p. 186. cap. xix. p. 187.

from

from the teſtimonies of TERTULLIAN, CLEMENS of *Alexandria*, and other writers. Thoſe, therefore, are not to be followed, who affirmed, that the Chriſtians ſuffered nothing under SEVERUS before the beginning of the third century, which was diſtinguiſhed by the cruel edicts of this emperor againſt their lives and fortunes. For, as the imperial laws againſt the Chriſtians were not abrogated, and the iniquitous edicts of TRAJAN and MARCUS ANTONINUS were ſtill in force, there was a door, of conſequence, open to the fury and injuſtice of corrupt magiſtrates, as often as they were pleaſed to exerciſe them upon the church. It was this ſeries of calamities, under which it groaned towards the concluſion of the ſecond century, which engaged TERTULLIAN to write his *Apology*, and ſeveral other books, in defence of the Chriſtians.

The calumnies employed to render them odious.

VIII. It is very eaſy to account for the ſufferings and calamities with which the diſciples of JESUS were loaded, when we conſider how they were blackened and rendered odious by the railings, the calumnies, and libels of the Heathen prieſts, and the other defenders of a corrupt and moſt abominable ſyſtem of ſuperſtition. The injurious imputations, the horrid charges of which we took notice above, are mentioned by all thoſe who have written in defence of the Chriſtians, and ought, indeed, to ſtand always upon record, as a proof both of the weakneſs and wickedneſs of their adverſaries. Nothing can be more frivolous and inſignificant than the objections which the moſt famous defenders of Paganiſm oppoſed to the truth of Chriſtianity at this time; and ſuch as deſire a convincing proof of this aſſertion, have only to read the arguments of CELSUS on that ſubject. This philoſopher wrote againſt the Chriſtians during the reign of ADRIAN, and was admirably refuted, in the following century, by ORI-

CENT. II. PART I.

GEN, who repreſents him as an Epicurean (a miſtake which has been almoſt generally followed), whereas it appears, with the utmoſt probability, that he was a Platonic philoſopher of the ſect of AMMONIUS [*c*]. Be that as it will, CELSUS was a trifling caviller, as is manifeſt from the anſwer of ORIGEN; nor do his writings againſt Chriſtianity ſerve any other purpoſe, than to ſhew his malignant and illiberal turn of mind.

FRONTO the rhetorician, and CRESCENS the Cynic philoſopher, made alſo ſome wretched attempts againſt Chriſtianity. The efforts of the former are only known by the mention that is made of them by MINUTIUS FELIX [*d*]; and the enterprizes of the latter were confined to a vehement zeal for the ruin of the Chriſtians, and a virulent perſecution of JUSTIN MARTYR, which ended in the cruel death of that eminent ſaint [*e*].

☞ [*c*] The learned Dr. LARDNER does not think it poſſible, that CELSUS could have been of the ſect of AMMONIUS; ſince the former lived and wrote in the ſecond century, whereas the latter did not flouriſh before the third. And indeed we learn from ORIGEN himſelf, that he knew of two only of the name of CELSUS, one who lived in the time of NERO, and the other in the reign of ADRIAN, and afterwards. The latter was the philoſopher who wrote againſt Chriſtianity.

[*d*] *Octavius*, p. 266. edit. Heraldi.

[*e*] JUSTIN MART. *Apologia ſecunda*, p. 21. TATIAN. *Orat. contra Græcos*, p. 72. edit. Worthii.

# PART II.

## The INTERNAL HISTORY of the CHURCH.

### CHAPTER I.

*Concerning the ſtate of letters and philoſophy during this century.*



The ſtate of learning.

UNDER the reign of TRAJAN, letters and philoſophy came forth from the retreat where they had languiſhed during the ſavage tyranny of his predeceſſors, and, by the auſpicious protection of this excellent prince, were in ſome meaſure reſtored to their former luſtre [*f*]. This happy revolution, in the republic of letters, was, indeed, but of a ſhort duration, as it was not ſupported by the following emperors, who were, for the moſt part, averſe to literary purſuits. Even MARCUS ANTONINUS, who ſurpaſſed them all in learning, gave protection and encouragement to the Stoics alone, and, after the example of that ſupercilious ſect, treated the arts and ſciences with indifference and contempt [*g*]. And here we ſee the true reaſon why the writers of this century are, in general, ſo much inferior to thoſe of the former, in point of elegance and purity, eloquence and taſte.

Learned men.

II. It muſt be obſerved, at the ſame time, that this degeneracy of erudition and taſte did not amount to an utter extinction of the one and the other. For, even in this century, there were, both among the Greeks and Romans, men of emi-

[*f*] PLIN. epiſt. lib. iii. ep. 18.
[*g*] In the firſt book of his meditations, § 7. 17.

CENT. II. PART II.

nent genius and abilities, who ſet off, in the moſt advantageous manner, the learning of the times in which they lived. Among the learned Grecians, the firſt place is due to PLUTARCH, a man of vaſt erudition, whoſe knowledge was various, but indigeſted, and whoſe philoſophical taſte was corrupted by the ſceptical tenets of the academics. There were, likewiſe, in all the more conſiderable cities of the Roman empire, rhetoricians, ſophiſts, and grammarians, who, by a variety of learned exerciſes, ſeemed zealous in forming the youth to their arts of eloquence and declamation, and in rendering them fit, by their talents and their acquiſitions, to be uſeful to their country. But the inſtruction acquired in theſe ſchools was more ſpecious than ſolid; and the youth who received their education in them, diſtinguiſhed themſelves at their entrance upon the active ſtage of life, more by empty declamation, than by true eloquence; more by pompous erudition, than by wiſdom and dexterity in the management of public affairs. The conſequence of this was, that the rhetoricians and ſophiſts, though, agreeable to the corrupt taſte of the times, which was incapable, generally ſpeaking, of perceiving the native charms of truth, yet fell into contempt among the prudent and the wiſe, who held in deriſion the knowledge and education that were acquired in their auditories. Beſides the ſchools now mentioned, there were two public academies in the empire; the one at *Rome* founded by ADRIAN, in which all the ſciences were taught; and the other at *Berytus* in *Phœnicia*, which was principally deſtined for the education of the youth in the ſcience of law [*b*].

Stoics.

III. Many philoſophers of all the different ſects flouriſhed at this time, whoſe names we think it

[*b*] See the meditations of M. ANTONINUS, book i. §7. 10.

not neceſſary to mention [*i*]. Two, however, there were of ſuch remarkable and ſhining merit, as rendered them real ornaments to the Stoic philoſophy, which the meditations of MARCUS ANTONINUS and the manual of EPICTETUS abundantly teſtify. Theſe two great men had more admirers than diſciples and followers; for, in this century, the Stoical ſect was not in the higheſt eſteem, as the rigour and auſterity of its doctrine were, by no means, ſuited to the diſſolute manners of the times. The Platonic ſchools were more frequented for ſeveral reaſons, and particularly for theſe two, that their moral precepts were leſs rigorous and ſevere than thoſe of the Stoics, and their doctrines more conformable to, or, rather, leſs incompatible with, the common opinions concerning the gods. But of all the philoſophers, the Epicureans enjoyed the greateſt reputation, and had undoubtedly the greateſt number of followers, becauſe their opinions tended to encourage the indolent ſecurity of a voluptuous and effeminate life, and to baniſh the remorſe and terrors that haunt vice, and naturally incommode the wicked in their ſenſual purſuits [*k*].

Platonics.

Epicureans.

IV. Towards the concluſion of this century, a new ſect of philoſophers aroſe of a ſudden, ſpread with amazing rapidity throughout the greateſt part of the Roman empire, ſwallowed up almoſt all the other ſects, and was extremely detrimental to the cauſe of Chriſtianity. *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, which had been, for a long time, the ſeat of learning, and, as it were, the centre of all the liberal arts and ſciences, gave birth to this new philoſophy. Its votaries choſe to be called Platonics; though, far from adhering to all the tenets

The riſe of the new Platonics in *Egypt*.

[*i*] JUSTIN MART. *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, opp. p. 218, &c. We find alſo many of theſe philoſophers mentioned in the meditations of the emperor MARC. ANTONINUS.

[*k*] LUCIAN *Pſeudomant.* p. 763. tom. i. opp.

CENT. II. PART II.

of PLATO, they collected, from the different ſects, ſuch doctrines as they thought conformable to truth, and formed thereof one general ſyſtem. The reaſon then, why they diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the title of Platonics, was, that they thought the ſentiments of PLATO, concerning that moſt noble part of philoſophy, which has the Deity, and things inviſible, for its objects, much more rational and ſublime than thoſe of the other philoſophers.

V. What gave to this new philoſophy a ſuperior air of reaſon and dignity, was, the unprejudiced ſpirit of candour and impartiality on which it ſeemed to be founded. This recommended it particularly to thoſe real ſages, whoſe iniquiries were accompanied with wiſdom and moderation, and who were ſick of thoſe arrogant and contentious ſects, which required an invariable attachment to their particular ſyſtems. And, indeed, nothing could have a more engaging aſpect than a ſet of men, who, abandoning all cavil, and all prejudices in favour of any party, profeſſed ſearching after the truth alone, and were ready to adopt, from all the different ſyſtems and ſects, ſuch tenets as they thought agreeable to it. From hence alſo they were called Eclectics. It is, however, to be obſerved, as we hinted in the former ſection, that though theſe philoſophers were attached to no particular ſect, yet they preferred, as appears from a variety of teſtimonies, the ſublime PLATO to all other ſages, and approved of the moſt of his opinions concerning the Deity, the univerſe, and the human ſoul.

Called alſo Eclectics.

VI. This new ſpecies of Platoniſm was embraced by ſuch of the Alexandrian Chriſtians as were deſirous to retain, with the profeſſion of the goſpel, the title, the dignity, and the habit, of philoſophers. It is alſo ſaid to have had the particular approbation of ATHENAGORAS, PANTÆNUS,

Their diſcipline approved by the Chriſtians.

NUS, CLEMENS the Alexandrian, and all thoſe who, in this century, were charged with the care of the public ſchool [*l*], which the Chriſtians had at *Alexandria*. Theſe ſages were of opinion, that *true philoſophy*, the greateſt and moſt ſalutary gift of God to mortals, was ſcattered in various portions through all the different ſects; and that it was, conſequently, the duty of every wiſe man, and more eſpecially of every Chriſtian doctor, to gather it from the ſeveral corners, where it lay diſperſed, and to employ it, thus re-united, in the defence of religion, and in deſtroying the dominion of impiety and vice. The Chriſtian Eclectics had this alſo in common with the others, that they preferred PLATO to the other philoſophers, and looked upon his opinions concerning God, the human ſoul, and things inviſible, as conformable to the ſpirit and genius of the Chriſtian doctrine.

The new method of teaching philoſophy introduced by Ammonius Saccas.

VII. This philoſophical ſyſtem underwent ſome changes, when AMMONIUS SACCAS, who taught, with the higheſt applauſe, in the Alexandrian ſchool, about the concluſion of this century, laid the foundations of that ſect which was diſtinguiſhed by the name of the New Platonics. This learned man was born of Chriſtian parents, and never, perhaps, gave up entirely the outward profeſſion of that divine religion in which he had been educated [*m*]. As his genius was vaſt and compre-

[*l*] The title and dignity of philoſophers delighted ſo much theſe honeſt men, that, though they were advanced in the church to the rank of preſbyters, they would not abandon the philoſopher's *cloak*. See ORIGEN, *Epiſt. ad Euſebium*, tom. i. opp. p. 2. edit. de la Rue.

☞ [*m*] PORPHYRY, in his third book againſt the Chriſtians, maintains, that AMMONIUS deſerted the Chriſtian religion, and went over to Paganiſm as ſoon as he came to that time of life, when the mind is capable of making a wiſe and judicious choice. EUSEBIUS, on the other hand, denies this aſſertion; maintains, that AMMONIUS perſevered conſtantly in the profeſſion

comprehenſive, ſo were his projects bold and ſingular. For he attempted a general reconciliation or coalition of all ſects, whether philoſophical or religious, and taught a doctrine, which he looked upon as proper to unite them all, the Chriſtians not excepted, in the moſt perfect har-

feſſion of Chriſtianity, and is followed, in this opinion, by VALESIUS, BAYLE, BASNAGE, and others. The learned FABRICIUS is of opinion, that EUSEBIUS confounded together two perſons, who bore the name of AMMONIUS, one of whom was a Chriſtian writer, and the other a Heathen philoſopher. See FABRIC. *Biblioth. Græca*, lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 159. The truth of the matter ſeems to have been, that AMMONIUS SACCAS was a Chriſtian, who adopted with ſuch dexterity the doctrines of the Pagan philoſophy, as to appear a Chriſtian to the Chriſtians, and a Pagan to the Pagans. See BRUCKET's *Hiſtoria Critica Philoſophiæ*, vol. ii. and iii. Since the firſt edition of this work was publiſhed, the learned Dr. LARDNER has maintained, not without a certain degree of aſperity, which is unuſual in his valuable writings, the opinion of FABRICIUS, againſt EUSEBIUS, and particularly againſt Dr. MOSHEIM. See his *Collection of Heathen and Jewiſh Teſtimonies*, vol. iii. p. 195, &c. Dr. MOSHEIM was once of the ſame opinion with FABRICIUS, and he maintained it in a diſſertation *De eccleſia turbata per recentiores Platonicos*; but he afterwards ſaw reaſon to change his mind. Theſe reaſons may be ſeen in his book *De rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſt. Mag.* p. 281, &c. They indeed weigh little with Dr. LARDNER, who however oppoſes nothing to them but mere aſſertions, unſupported by the ſmalleſt glimpſe of evidence. For the letter of ORIGEN he quotes from EUSEBIUS, is ſo far from proving that AMMONIUS was *merely* a Heathen philoſopher, and not a Chriſtian, that it would not be ſufficient to demonſtrate that there was ever ſuch a perſon as AMMONIUS in the world; ſince he is not ſo much as named in that letter. But, allowing with VALESIUS that it is AMMONIUS whom ORIGEN has in view, when he talks of the philoſophical maſter from whom he and HERACLAS received inſtruction, it ſeems very whimſical to conclude from thence, that AMMONIUS was no Chriſtian. The coalition between Platoniſm and Chriſtianity, in the ſecond and third centuries, is a fact too fully proved to be rendered dubious by mere affirmations. The notion therefore of two perſons bearing the name of AMMONIUS, the one a Heathen philoſopher, and the other a Chriſtian writer, of which Dr. LARDNER ſeems ſo fond, reſts upon little more than an hypotheſis formed to remove an imaginary difficulty.

mony.

mony. And herein lies the difference between this new ſect and the Eclectics, who had, before this time, flouriſhed in *Egypt*. The Eclectics held, that in every ſect there was a mixture of good and bad, of truth and falſehood, and accordingly they choſe and adopted out of each of them, ſuch tenets as ſeemed to them conformable to reaſon and truth, and rejected ſuch as they thought repugnant to both. AMMONIUS, on the contrary, maintained, that the great principles of all philoſophical and religious truth were to be found, equally, in all ſects; that they differed from each other, only in their method of expreſſing them, and in ſome opinions of little or no importance; and that, by a proper interpretation of their reſpective ſentiments, they might eaſily be united into one body. It is further to be obſerved, that the propenſity of AMMONIUS to ſingularity and paradox, led him to maintain, that all the Gentile religions, and even the Chriſtian, were to be illuſtrated and explained by the principles of this univerſal philoſophy; but that, in order to this, the fables of the prieſts were to be removed from Paganiſm, and the comments and interpretations of the diſciples of JESUS from Chriſtianity.

The principles of the Ammonian or Eclectic philoſophy.

VIII. This arduous deſign, which AMMONIUS had formed of bringing about a coalition of all the various philoſophical ſects, and all the different ſyſtems of religion, that prevailed in the world, required many difficult and diſagreeable things in order to its execution. Every particular ſect and religion muſt have ſeveral of its doctrines curtailed or diſtorted, before it could enter into the general maſs. The tenets of the philoſophers, the ſuperſtitions of the Heathen prieſts, the ſolemn doctrines of Chriſtianity, were all to ſuffer in this cauſe, and forced allegories were to be ſubtly employed in removing the difficulties with which it was attended. How this vaſt project

ject was effected by AMMONIUS, the writings of his diſciples and followers, that yet remain, abundantly teſtify. In order to the accompliſhing his purpoſe, he ſuppoſed, that true philoſophy derived its origin and its conſiſtence from the eaſtern nations; that it was taught to the Egyptians by HERMES; that it was brought from them to the Greeks, by whoſe vain ſubtilties, and litigious diſputes, it was rendered ſomewhat obſcure and deformed; but was, however, preſerved in its original purity by PLATO, who was the beſt interpreter of HERMES, and of the other oriental ſages. He maintained, that all the different religions that prevailed in the world, were, in their original integrity, conformable to the genius of this ancient philoſophy; but that it unfortunately happened, that the ſymbols and fictions, under which, according to the eaſtern manner, the ancients delivered their precepts and their doctrines, were, in proceſs of time, erroneouſly underſtood both by prieſts and people in a literal ſenſe; that, in conſequence of this, the inviſible beings and demons, whom the Supreme Deity had placed in the different parts of the univerſe as the miniſters of his providence, were, by the ſuggeſtions of ſuperſtition, converted into gods, and worſhipped with a multiplicity of vain ceremonies. He therefore inſiſted, that all the religions of all nations ſhould be reſtored to their original purity, and reduced to their primitive ſtandard, *viz.* "The ancient philoſophy of the eaſt;" and he affirmed, that this his project was agreeable to the intentions of JESUS CHRIST, whoſe ſole view, in deſcending upon earth, was, to ſet bounds to the reigning ſuperſtition, to remove the errors that had crept into the religions of all nations, but not to aboliſh the ancient theology from whence they were derived.

Its chief articles.

IX. Taking theſe principles for granted, AMMONIUS adopted the doctrines which were received in

in *Egypt*, the place of his birth and education, concerning the *univerſe* and the *Deity* conſidered as conſtituting one great WHOLE; as alſo concerning the *eternity of the world*, the *nature of ſouls*, the *empire of providence*, and the *government of this world by demons*. For it is moſt evident, that the Egyptian philoſophy, which was ſaid to be derived from HERMES, was the baſis of that of AMMONIUS; or, as it is otherwiſe called, of *modern Platoniſm*; and the book of JAMBLICHUS, concerning the *myſteries of the Egyptians*, puts the matter beyond diſpute. AMMONIUS, therefore, aſſociated the ſentiments of the Egyptians with the doctrines of PLATO, which was eaſily done by adulterating ſome of the opinions of the latter, and forcing his expreſſions from their obvious and natural ſenſe. And, to finiſh this conciliatory ſcheme, he ſo interpreted the doctrines of the other philoſophical and religious ſects, by the violent ſuccours of art, invention, and allegory, that they ſeemed, at length, to bear ſome reſemblance of the Egyptian and Platonic ſyſtems.

The moral diſcipline of Ammonius.

X. To this monſtrous coalition of heterogeneous doctrines, its fanatical author added a rule of life and manners, which carried an aſpect of high ſanctity and uncommon auſterity. He, indeed, permitted the people to live according to the laws of their country, and the dictates of nature; but a more ſublime rule was laid down for the wiſe. They were to raiſe above all terreſtrial things, by the towering efforts of holy contemplation, thoſe ſouls whoſe origin was celeſtial and divine. They were ordered to extenuate, by hunger, thirſt, and other mortifications, the ſluggiſh body, which confines the activity, and reſtrains the liberty, of the immortal ſpirit; that thus, in this life, they might enjoy communion with the Supreme Being, and aſcend after death, active and unincumbered, to the univerſal Parent,

to live in his preſence for ever. As AMMONIUS was born and educated among the Chriſtians, he ſet off, and even gave an air of authority, to theſe injunctions, by expreſſing them partly in terms borrowed from the ſacred Scriptures, of which we find a vaſt number of citations, alſo, in the writings of his diſciples. To this auſtere diſcipline, he added the pretended art of ſo purging and refining that faculty of the mind, which receives the images of things, as to render it capable of perceiving the demons, and of performing many marvellous things by their aſſiſtance. This art, which the diſciples of AMMONIUS called *theurgy*, was not, however, communicated to all the ſchools of this fanatical philoſopher, but only to thoſe of the firſt rank.

His opinions concerning GOD and CHRIST.

XI. The extravagant attempts of AMMONIUS did not ceaſe here. To reconcile the popular religions of different countries, and particularly the Chriſtian, with this new ſyſtem, he fell upon the following inventions: 1*ſt*, He turned into a mere allegory the whole hiſtory of the gods, and maintained that thoſe beings, whom the prieſts and people dignified with this title, were no more than celeſtial miniſters, to whom a certain kind of worſhip was due; but a worſhip inferior to that which was to be reſerved for the Supreme Deity. 2*dly*, He acknowledged CHRIST to be a moſt excellent man, the friend of God, the admirable *theurge*; he denied, however, that JESUS deſigned to aboliſh entirely the worſhip of demons, and of the other miniſters of divine Providence; and affirmed, on the contrary, that his only intention was to purify the ancient religion, and that his followers had manifeſtly corrupted the doctrine of their divine maſter [*n*].

XII.

[*n*] What we have here mentioned concerning the doctrines and opinions of AMMONIUS, is gathered from the writings and diſputa-

XII. This new ſpecies of philoſophy, imprudently adopted by ORIGEN and many other Chriſtians, was extremely prejudicial to the cauſe of the goſpel, and to the beautiful ſimplicity of its celeſtial doctrines. For hence it was, that the Chriſtian doctors began to introduce their ſubtle and obſcure erudition into the religion of JESUS, to involve in the darkneſs of a vain philoſophy, ſome of the principal truths of Chriſtianity, that had been revealed with the utmoſt plainneſs, and were indeed obvious to the meaneſt capacity, and to add, to the divine precepts of our Lord, many of their own, which had no ſort of foundation in any part of the ſacred writings. From the ſame ſource aroſe that melancholy ſet of men, who have been diſtinguiſhed by the name of Myſtics, whoſe ſyſtem, when ſeparated from the Platonic doctrine concerning the nature and origin of the ſoul, is but a lifeleſs maſs, without any vigour, form, or conſiſtence. Nor did the evils, which ſprung from this Ammonian philoſophy, end here. For, under the ſpecious pretext of the neceſſity of contemplation, it gave occaſion to that ſlothful and indolent courſe of life, which continues to be led by myriads of monks retired in cells, and ſequeſtered from ſociety, to which they are neither uſeful by their inſtructions, nor by their examples. To this philoſophy we may trace as to their ſource, a multitude of vain and fooliſh ceremonies, proper only to caſt a veil over truth, and to nouriſh

The pernicious effects of this philoſophy.

diſputations of his diſciples, who are known by the name of the Modern Platonics. This philoſopher has left nothing in writing behind him; nay, he impoſed a law upon his diſciples not to divulge his doctrines among the multitude, which law, however, they made no ſcruple to neglect and violate. See PORPHYR. *Vit. Plotini*, cap. iii. p. 97. edit. Fabricii, lib. iv. *Biblioth. Græca*. At the ſame time there is no ſort of doubt, but that all theſe inventions belong properly to AMMONIUS, whom all the latter Platonics acknowledge as the founder of their ſect, and the author of their philoſophy.

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CENT. II. PART II.

ſuperſtition; and which are, for the moſt part, religiouſly obſerved by many, even in the times in which we live. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the pernicious conſequences that may be juſtly attributed to this new philoſophy, or rather to this monſtrous attempt to reconcile falſehood with truth, and light with darkneſs. Some of its moſt fatal effects were, its alienating the minds of many, in the following ages, from the Chriſtian religion; and its ſubſtituting, in the place of the pure and ſublime ſimplicity of the goſpel, an unſeemly mixture of Platoniſm and Chriſtianity.

The ſtate of learning among Chriſtians.

XIII. The number of learned men among the Chriſtians, which was very ſmall in the preceding century, grew conſiderably in this. Among theſe there were few rhetoricians, ſophiſts, or orators. The moſt part were philoſophers attached to the Eclectic ſyſtem, though they were not all of the ſame ſentiments concerning the utility of letters and philoſophy. Thoſe, who were themſelves initiated into the depths of philoſophy, were deſirous that others, particularly ſuch as aſpired to the offices of biſhops or doctors, ſhould apply themſelves to the ſtudy of human wiſdom, in order to their being the better qualified for defending the truth with vigour, and inſtructing the ignorant with ſucceſs. Others were of a quite different way of thinking upon this ſubject, and were for baniſhing all argumentation and philoſophy from the limits of the church, from a notion that erudition might prove detrimental to the true ſpirit of religion. Hence the early beginnings of that unhappy conteſt between *faith* and *reaſon*, *religion* and *philoſophy*, *piety* and *genius*, which increaſed in the ſucceeding ages, and is prolonged even to our times with a violence, that renders it extremely difficult to be brought to a concluſion. Thoſe, who maintained that learning and philoſophy were rather advantageous, than detrimental, to the cauſe of

of religion, gained, by degrees, the aſcendant; and, in conſequence thereof, laws were enacted, which excluded the ignorant and illiterate from the office of public teachers. The oppoſite ſide of the queſtion was not, however, without defenders; and the defects and vices of learned men and philoſophers contributed much to increaſe their number, as will appear in the progreſs of this hiſtory.

## CHAP. II.

### *Concerning the doctors and miniſters of the church, and the form of its government.*

The form of church government.

I. THE form of eccleſiaſtical government, whoſe commencement we have ſeen in the laſt century, was brought in this, to a greater degree of ſtability and conſiſtence. One inſpector, or *biſhop*, preſided over each Chriſtian aſſembly, to which office he was elected by the voices of the whole people. In this poſt he was to be watchful and provident, attentive to the wants of the church, and careful to ſupply them. To aſſiſt him in this laborious province, he formed a council of *preſbyters*, which was not confined to any fixed number; and to each of theſe he diſtributed his taſk, and appointed a ſtation, in which he was to promote the intereſts of the church. To the biſhops and preſbyters the miniſters, or *deacons*, were ſubject; and the latter were divided into a variety of claſſes, as the different exigencies of the church required.

Aſſociation of the provincial churches.

II. During a great part of this century, the Chriſtian churches were independent on each other; nor were they joined together by aſſociation, confederacy, or any other bonds but thoſe of charity. Each Chriſtian aſſembly was a little

CENT. II. PART II.

ſtate, governed by its own laws, which were either enacted, or, at leaſt, approved by the ſociety. But, in proceſs of time, all the Chriſtian churches of a province were formed into one large eccleſiaſtical body, which, like confederate ſtates, aſſembled at certain times, in order to deliberate about the common intereſts of the whole. This inſtitution had its origin among the Greeks, with whom nothing was more common than this confederacy of independent ſtates, and the regular aſſemblies which met, in conſequence thereof, at fixed times, and were compoſed of the deputies of each reſpective ſtate. But theſe eccleſiaſtical aſſociations were not long confined to the Greeks; their great utility was no ſooner perceived, than they became univerſal, and were formed in all places where the goſpel had been planted [o]. To theſe aſſemblies, in which the deputies or commiſſioners of ſeveral churches conſulted together, the name of *ſynods* was appropriated by the Greeks, and that of *councils* by the Latins; and the laws that were enacted, in theſe general meetings, were called *canons*, i. e. *rules*.

Origin of councils.

The authority of the biſhops augmented by theſe councils.

III. Theſe *councils*, of which we find not the ſmalleſt trace before the middle of this century, changed the whole face of the church, and gave it a new form; for by them the ancient privileges of the people were conſiderably diminiſhed, and the power and authority of the biſhops greatly augmented. The humility, indeed, and prudence of theſe pious prelates prevented their aſſuming all at once the power with which they were afterwards inveſted. At their firſt appearance in theſe general councils, they acknowledged that they were no more than the delegates of their reſpective churches, and that they acted in the name, and by the appointment, of their people. But they ſoon

[o] TERTULLIAN, *Lib. de Jejuniis*, cap. xiii. p. 711.

changed this humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion, and their counsels into laws; and openly asserted, at length, that CHRIST had empowered them to prescribe to his people *authoritative rules* of *faith* and *manners*. Another effect of these councils was, the gradual abolition of that perfect equality, which reigned among all bishops in the primitive times. For the order and decency of these assemblies required, that some one of the provincial bishops met in council, should be invested with a superior degree of power and authority; and hence the rights of Metropolitans derive their origin. In the mean time, the bounds of the church were enlarged; the custom of holding councils was followed wherever the sound of the gospel had reached; and the universal church had now the appearance of one vast republic, formed by a combination of a great number of little states. This occasioned the creation of a new order of ecclesiastics, who were appointed, in different parts of the world, as heads of the church, and whose office it was to preserve the consistence and union of that immense body, whose members were so widely dispersed throughout the nations. Such was the nature and office of the *patriarchs*, among whom, at length, ambition, being arrived at its most insolent period, formed a new dignity, investing the bishop of *Rome*, and his successors, with the title and authority of prince of the patriarchs.

Metropolitans.

IV. The Christian doctors had the good fortune to persuade the people, that the ministers of the Christian church succeeded to the character, rights, and privileges, of the Jewish priesthood; and this persuasion was a new source both of honours and profit to the sacred order. This notion was propagated with industry some time after the reign of ADRIAN, when the second destruction of

An artful Parallel drawn between the Christian and the Jewish Priesthood.

CENT. II. PART II.

*Jeruſalem* had extinguiſhed among the Jews all hopes of ſeeing their government reſtored to its former luſtre, and their country ariſing out of ruins. And, accordingly, the *biſhops* conſidered themſelves as inveſted with a rank and character ſimilar to thoſe of the *high-prieſt* among the Jews, while the *preſbyters* repreſented the prieſts, and the *deacons* the *Levites*. It is, indeed, highly probable, that they, who firſt introduced this abſurd compariſon of offices ſo entirely diſtinct, did it rather through ignorance and error, than through artifice or deſign. The notion, however, once introduced, produced its natural effects; and theſe effects were pernicious. The errors to which it gave riſe were many; and one of its immediate conſequences was, the eſtabliſhing a greater difference between the Chriſtian paſtors and their flock, than the genius of the goſpel ſeems to admit.

The principal writers.

V. From the government of the church, let us turn our eyes to thoſe who maintained its cauſe by their learned and judicious writings. Among theſe was JUSTIN, a man of eminent piety and conſiderable learning, who, from a Pagan philoſopher, became a Chriſtian martyr. He had frequented all the different ſects of philoſophy, in an ardent and impartial purſuit of truth; and finding, neither among Stoics nor Peripatetics, neither in the Pythagorean nor Platonic ſchools, any ſatisfactory account of the perfections of the Supreme Being, and the nature and deſtination of the human ſoul, he embraced Chriſtianity on account of the light which it caſt upon theſe intereſting ſubjects. We have yet remaining his two *apologies* in behalf of the Chriſtians, which are moſt deſervedly held in high eſteem; notwithſtanding that, in ſome paſſages of them, he ſhews himſelf an unwary diſputer, and betrays a want of acquaintance with ancient hiſtory.

IRENÆUS,

IRENÆUS, biſhop of *Lyons*, a Greek by birth, and probably born of Chriſtian parents, a diſciple alſo of POLYCARP, by whom he was ſent to preach the goſpel among the Gauls, is another of the writers of this century, whoſe labours were ſingularly uſeful to the church. He turned his pen againſt its internal and domeſtic enemies, by attacking the monſtrous errors which were adopted by many of the primitive Chriſtians, as appears by his *five books againſt hereſies*, which are yet preſerved in a Latin tranſlation [*p*], and are conſidered as one of the moſt precious monuments of ancient erudition.

ATHENAGORAS alſo deſerves a place among the eſtimable writers of this age. He was a philoſopher of no mean reputation, and his *apology* for the Chriſtians, as well as his *treatiſe upon the reſurrection*, afford ſtriking proofs of his learning and genius.

The works of THEOPHILUS, biſhop of *Antioch*, are more remarkable for their erudition, than for their order and method; this, at leaſt, is true of his *three books in defence of Chriſtianity*, addreſſed to AUTOLYCUS [*q*]. But the moſt illuſtrious writer of this century, and the moſt juſtly renowned for his various erudition, and his perfect acquaintance with the ancient ſages, was

☞ [*p*] The firſt book is yet extant in the original Greek; of the reſt, we have only a Latin verſion, through the barbarity of which, though exceſſive, it is eaſy to diſcern the eloquence and erudition that reign throughout the original. See *Hiſt. Litteraire de la France.*

☞ [*q*] THEOPHILUS was the author of ſeveral works, beſide thoſe mentioned by Dr. MOSHEIM, particularly of a *commentary upon the Proverbs*, another upon the *Four Evangeliſts*, and of ſeveral ſhort and pathetic diſcourſes, which he publiſhed, from time to time, for the uſe of his flock. He alſo wrote againſt MARCION and HERMOGENES, and, refuting the errors of theſe heretics, he quotes ſeveral paſſages of the *Revelations*.

CENT. II. PART II.

CLEMENS, the diſciple of PANTÆNUS, and the head of the Alexandrian ſchool, deſtined for the inſtruction of the catechumens. His *Stromata*, *Pedagogue*,, and *Exhortation*, addreſſed to the Greeks, which are yet extant, abundantly ſhew the extent of his learning, and the force of his genius; though he is neither to be admired for the preciſion of his ideas, nor for the perſpicuity of his ſtyle. It is alſo to be lamented, that his exceſſive attachment to the reigning philoſophy led him into a variety of pernicious errors.

Hitherto we have made no mention of the Latin writers, who employed their pens in the Chriſtian cauſe. And, indeed, the only one of any note, we find in this century, is TERTULLIAN, by birth a Carthaginian, who, having firſt embraced the profeſſion of the law, became afterwards a preſbyter of the church, and concluded by adopting the heretical viſions of MONTANUS. He was a man of extenſive learning, of a fine genius, and highly admired for his elocution in the Latin tongue. We have ſeveral works of his yet remaining, which were deſigned to explain and defend the truth, and to nouriſh pious affections in the hearts of Chriſtians. There was, indeed, ſuch a mixture in the qualities of this man, that it is difficult to fix his real character, and to determine which of the two were predominant, his *virtues*, or his *defects*. He was endowed with a great genius, but ſeemed deficient in point of judgment. His piety was warm and vigorous, but, at the ſame time, melancholy and auſtere. His learning was extenſive and profound; and yet his credulity and ſuperſtition were ſuch as might have been expected from the darkeſt ignorance. And with reſpect to his reaſonings, they had more of that ſubtilty that dazzles the imagi-

imagination, than of that ſolidity that brings light and conviction to the mind [r].

## CHAP. III.

### *Concerning the doctrine of the Chriſtian church, in this century.*

I. THE Chriſtian ſyſtem, as it was hitherto taught, preſerved its native and beautiful ſimplicity, and was comprehended in a ſmall number of articles. The public teachers inculcated no other doctrines, than thoſe that are contained in, what is commonly called, the *Apoſtles Creed*: and, in the method of illuſtrating them, all vain ſubtilties, all myſterious reſearches, every thing that was beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided. This will by no means appear ſurpriſing to thoſe who conſider, that, at this time, there was not the leaſt controverſy about thoſe capital doctrines of Chriſtianity, which were afterwards ſo keenly debated in the church; and who reflect, that the biſhops of theſe primitive times were, for the moſt part, plain and illiterate men, remarkable rather for their piety and zeal, than for their learning and eloquence. The ſimplicity of primitive Chriſtianity.

II. This venerable ſimplicity was not, indeed, of a long duration; its beauty was gradually effaced by the laborious efforts of human learn- Altered by degrees.

[r] It is proper to point out to ſuch as are deſirous of a more particular account of the works, as alſo of the excellencies and defects of theſe ancient writers, the authors who have profeſſedly written concerning them, and the principal are thoſe who follow: Jo. ALB. FABRICIUS, in *Biblioth. Græc. et Latin.* CAVE, *Hiſt. Litter. Scriptor Eccl.* DU PIN et CELLIER, *Biblioth. des Auteurs Eccleſiaſtiques.*

CENT. II. PART II.

ing, and the dark ſubtilties of imaginary ſcience. Acute reſearches were employed upon ſeveral religious ſubjects, concerning which ingenious deciſions were pronounced; and, what was worſt of all, ſeveral tenets of a chimerical philoſophy were imprudently incorporated into the Chriſtian ſyſtem. This diſadvantageous change, this unhappy alteration of the primitive ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion, was chiefly owing to two reaſons; the one drawn from pride, and the other from a ſort of neceſſity. The former was the eagerneſs of certain learned men, to bring about a union between the doctrines of Chriſtianity, and the opinions of the philoſophers; for they thought it a very fine accompliſhment, to be able to expreſs the precepts of CHRIST in the language of *philoſophers*, *civilians*, and *rabbins*. The other reaſon that contributed to alter the ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion, was, the neceſſity of having recourſe to logical definitions and nice diſtinctions, in order to confound the ſophiſtical arguments which the infidel and the heretic employed, the one to overturn the Chriſtian ſyſtem, and the other to corrupt it. ☞ Theſe philoſophical arms, in the hands of the judicious and wiſe, were both honourable and uſeful to religion; but when they came to be handled by every ignorant and ſelf-ſufficient meddler, as was afterwards the caſe, they produced nothing but perplexity and confuſion, under which genuine Chriſtianity almoſt diſappeared.

This proved by an example.

III. Many examples might be alleged, which verify the obſervations we have now been making; and, if the reader is deſirous of a ſtriking one, he has only to take a view of the doctrines which began to be taught in this century, concerning the ſtate of the ſoul after the diſſolution of the body. JESUS and his diſciples had ſimply declared, that the ſouls of good men were, at their departure

departure from their bodies, to be received into heaven, while thoſe of the wicked were to be ſent to hell; and this was ſufficient for the firſt diſciples of CHRIST to know, as they had more piety than curioſity, and were ſatisfied with the knowledge of this ſolemn fact, without any inclination to penetrate its *manner*, or to pry into its ſecret reaſons. But this plain doctrine was ſoon diſguiſed, when Platoniſm began to infect Chriſtianity. PLATO had taught, that the ſouls of heroes, of illuſtrious men, and eminent philoſophers alone, aſcended, after death, into the manſions of light and felicity; while thoſe of the generality, weighed down by their luſts and paſſions, ſunk into the infernal regions, from whence they were not permitted to emerge, before they were purified from their turpitude and corruption [*s*]. This doctrine was ſeized with avidity by the Platonic Chriſtians, and applied as a commentary upon that of JESUS. Hence a notion prevailed, that the *martyrs* only entered upon a ſtate of happineſs immediately after death, and that, for the reſt, a certain obſcure region was aſſigned, in which they were to be impriſoned until the ſecond coming of CHRIST, or, at leaſt, until they were purified from their various pollutions. This doctrine, enlarged and improved upon by the irregular fancies of injudicious men, became a ſource of innumerable errors, vain ceremonies, and monſtrous ſuperſtitions.

IV. But, however the doctrines of the goſpel may have been abuſed by the commentaries and interpretations of different ſects, yet all were unanimous in regarding with veneration the holy

**Zeal for the holy Scriptures.**

[*s*] See an ample account of the opinions of the Platonics, and other ancient philoſophers, upon this ſubject, in the notes which Dr. MOSHEIM has added to his Latin tranſlation of CUDWORTH's *Intellectual Syſtem*, tom. ii. p. 1036.

CENT. II. PART II.

Scriptures, as the great rule of faith and manners; and hence that laudable and pious zeal of adapting them to general uſe. We have mentioned already the tranſlations that were made of them into different languages, and it will not be improper to ſay ſomething here concerning thoſe who employed their uſeful labours in explaining and interpreting them. PANTÆNUS, the head of the Alexandrian ſchool, was probably the firſt, who enriched the church with a verſion of the ſacred writings, which has been loſt among the ruins of time. The ſame fate attended the *commentary* of CLEMENS the Alexandrian, upon the *canonical epiſtles*; and alſo another celebrated work [*t*] of the ſame author, in which he is ſaid to have explained, in a compendious manner, almoſt all the ſacred writings. The *harmony of the Evangeliſts*, compoſed by TATIAN, is yet extant. But the *expoſition of the Revelations*, by JUSTIN MARTYR, and of the *four goſpels* by THEOPHILUS biſhop of *Antioch*, together with ſeveral illuſtrations of the Moſaic hiſtory of the creation by other ancient writers, are all loſt.

The defects of the ancient interpreters.

V. The loſs of theſe ancient productions is the leſs to be regretted, as we know, with certainty, their vaſt inferiority to the expoſitions of the holy Scriptures that appeared in ſucceeding times. Among the perſons already mentioned, there was none who deſerved the name of an eminent and judicious interpreter of the ſacred text. They all attributed a *double ſenſe* to the words of ſcripture; the one *obvious* and literal, the other *hidden* and myſterious, which lay concealed, as it were, under the veil of the outward letter. The former they treated with the utmoſt neglect, and turned the whole force of their genius and application to unfold the latter: or, in other words,

[*t*] Viz. CLEMENTIS *Hypotyſoſes*.

they

they were more ſtudious to darken the holy Scriptures with their idle fictions, than to inveſtigate their true and natural ſenſe. Some of them alſo forced the expreſſions of ſacred writ out of their obvious meaning, in order to apply them to the ſupport of their philoſophical ſyſtems; of which dangerous and pernicious attempts, CLEMENS of *Alexandria* is ſaid to have given the firſt example. With reſpect to the expoſitors of the Old Teſtament in this century, we ſhall only make this general remark, that their exceſſive veneration for the Alexandrian verſion, commonly called the Septuagint, which they regarded almoſt as of divine authority, confined their views, fettered, as it were, their critical ſpirit, and hindered them from producing any thing excellent in the way of ſacred criticiſm or interpretation.

Of ſyſtematic divinity.

VI. If this age was not very fertile in ſacred critics, it was ſtill leſs ſo in expoſitors of the doctrinal parts of religion; for hitherto there was no attempt made, at leaſt that is come to our knowledge, of compoſing a *ſyſtem*, or complete view of the Chriſtian doctrine. Some treatiſes of ARABIAN, relative to this ſubject, are indeed mentioned; but as they are loſt, and ſeem not to have been much known by any of the writers whoſe works have ſurvived them, we can form no concluſions concerning them. The books of PAPIAS, concerning the *ſayings of* CHRIST *and his apoſtles*, were, according to the accounts which EUSEBIUS gives of them, rather an hiſtorical commentary, than a theological ſyſtem. MELITO, biſhop of *Sardis*, is ſaid to have written ſeveral treatiſes, one concerning *faith*, another on the *creation*, a third concerning the *church*, and a fourth concerning *truth*; but it does not appear from the titles of theſe writings, whether they were of a doctrinal or controverſial nature.

CENT. II. PART II.

nature [*u*]. Several of the polemic writers, indeed, have been naturally led, in the courſe of controverſy, to explain amply certain points of religion. But thoſe doctrines, which have not been diſputed, are very rarely defined with ſuch accuracy, by the ancient writers, as to point out to us clearly what their opinions concerning them were. And from hence it ought not to appear ſurpriſing, that all the different ſects of Chriſtians pretend to find, in the writings of the fathers, deciſions favourable to their reſpective tenets.

The controverſial writers.

VII. The controverſial writers, who ſhone in this century, had three different ſorts of adverſaries to combat; the Jews, the Pagans, and thoſe, who, in the boſom of Chriſtianity, corrupted its doctrines, and produced various ſects and diviſions in the church. JUSTIN MARTYR, and TERTULLIAN, embarked in a controverſy with the Jews, which it was not poſſible for them to manage with the higheſt ſucceſs and dexterity, as they were very little acquainted with the language, the hiſtory, and the learning of the Hebrews, and wrote with more levity and inaccuracy, than was juſtifiable on ſuch a ſubject. Of thoſe who managed the cauſe of Chriſtianity againſt the Pagans, ſome performed this important taſk by compoſing *apologies* for the Chriſtians; and others by addreſſing pathetic exhortations to the Gentiles. Among the former were, ATHENA-

☞ [*u*] MELITO, beſides his *apology* for the Chriſtians, and the treatiſes mentioned by Dr. MOSHEIM here, wrote a diſcourſe upon Eaſter, and ſeveral other diſſertations, of which we have only ſome ſcattered fragments remaining; but what is worthy of remark here, is, that he is the firſt Chriſtian writer that has given us a catalogue of the books of the Old Teſtament. His catalogue alſo is perfectly conformable to that of the Jews, except in this point only, that he has omitted in it the book of *Eſther*.

GORAS,

GORAS, MELITO, QUADRATUS, MILTIADES, ARISTIDES, TATIAN, and JUSTIN MARTYR; and among the latter, TERTULLIAN, CLEMENS, JUSTIN, and THEOPHILUS biſhop of *Antioch*. All theſe writers attacked, with judgment, dexterity, and ſucceſs, the Pagan ſuperſtition, and alſo defended the Chriſtians, in a victorious manner, againſt all the calumnies and aſperſions of their enemies. But they did not ſucceed ſo well in unfolding the true nature and genius of Chriſtianity, nor were the arguments they made uſe of to demonſtrate its truth and divinity ſo full of energy, ſo ſtriking and irreſiſtible, as thoſe by which they overturned the Pagan ſyſtem. In a word, both their explication and defence of many of the doctrines of Chriſtianity are defective and unſatisfactory in ſeveral reſpects. As to thoſe who directed their polemic efforts againſt the heretics, their number was prodigious, though few of their writings have come down to our times. IRENÆUS refuted the whole tribe, in a work deſtined ſolely for that purpoſe. CLEMENS [*w*], TERTULLIAN [*x*], and JUSTIN MARTYR, wrote alſo againſt all the ſectaries; but the work of the laſt, upon that ſubject, is not extant. It would be endleſs to mention thoſe who combated particular errors, of whoſe writings, alſo, many have diſappeared amidſt the decays of time, and the revolutions that have happened in the republic of letters.

Good and bad qualities of the ancient diſputants.

VIII. If the primitive defenders of Chriſtianity were not always happy in the choice of their arguments, yet they diſcovered more candour and probity than thoſe of the following ages. The artifice of ſophiſtry, and the habit of employing pious frauds in ſupport of the truth, had not, as yet, infected the Chriſtians. And this, indeed,

[*w*] In his work, intitled, *Stromata*.
[*x*] In his *Præſcriptiones adverſus hæreticos*.

is

CENT. II. PART II.

is all that can be ſaid in their behalf; for they are worthy of little admiration on account of the accuracy or depth of their reaſonings. The moſt of them appear to have been deſtitute of penetration, learning, order, application, and force. They frequently make uſe of arguments void of all ſolidity, and much more proper to dazzle the fancy, than to enlighten and convince the mind. One, laying aſide the ſacred writings, from whence all the weapons of religious controverſy ought to be drawn, refers to the deciſions of thoſe biſhops who ruled the apoſtolic churches. Another thinks, that the antiquity of a doctrine is a mark of its truth, and pleads preſcription againſt his adverſaries, as if he was maintaining his property before a civil magiſtrate; than which method of diſputing nothing can be more pernicious to the cauſe of truth. A third imitates thoſe wrong-headed diſputants among the Jews, who, infatuated with their cabaliſtic jargon, offered, as arguments, the imaginary *powers* of certain myſtic words and choſen numbers [*y*]. Nor do they ſeem to err, who are of opinion, that in this century, that vicious method [*z*] of diſputing, which afterwards obtained the name of *æconomical*, was firſt introduced [*a*].

Moral writers.

IX. The principal points of morality were treated by JUSTIN MARTYR, or, at leaſt, by the

[*y*] Several examples of this ſenſeleſs method of reaſoning, are to be found in different writers. See particularly BASNAGE, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, tom. iii. p. 660. 694.

☞ [*z*] The *æconomical* method of diſputing was that in which the diſputants accommodated themſelves, as far as was poſſible, to the taſte and prejudices of thoſe whom they were endeavouring to gain over to the truth. Some of the firſt Chriſtians carried this condeſcenſion too far, and abuſed St. PAUL's example (1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22.) to a degree inconſiſtent with the purity and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian doctrine.

[*a*] RICH. SIMON, *Hiſtoire Critique des principaux Commentateurs du N. T.* cap. ii. p. 21.

writer

writer of the *epiſtle to* ZENA *and* SERENUS, which is to be found among the works of that celebrated author. Many other writers confined themſelves to particular branches of the moral ſyſtem, which they handled with much attention and zeal. Thus CLEMENS, of *Alexandria*, wrote ſeveral treatiſes concerning *calumny*, *patience*, *continence*, and other virtues, which diſcourſes have not reached our times. Thoſe of TERTULLIAN upon *chaſtity*, upon *flight in the time of perſecution*, as alſo upon *faſting*, *ſhows*, *female ornaments*, and *prayer*, have ſurvived the waſte of time, and might be read with much fruit, were the ſtyle, in which they are written, leſs laboured and difficult, and the ſpirit they breathe leſs melancholy and moroſe.

Of the merit of the fathers, as moral writers.

X. Learned men are not unanimous concerning the degree of eſteem that is due to the authors now mentioned, and the other ancient moraliſts. Some repreſent them as the moſt excellent guides in the paths of piety and virtue; while others place them in the very loweſt rank of moral writers, conſider them as the very worſt of all inſtructors, and treat their precepts and deciſions as perfectly inſipid, and, in many reſpects, pernicious. We leave the determination of this point to ſuch as are more capable of pronouncing deciſively upon it, than we pretend to be [*b*]. It, however, appears to us inconteſtable, that, in the

[*b*] This queſtion was warmly and learnedly debated between the deſervedly celebrated BARBEYRAC and CELLIER a Benedictin monk. BUDDEUS has given us an hiſtory of this controverſy, with his own judgment of it, in his *Iſagoge ad Thelogiam*, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 620, &c. BARBEYRAC, however, publiſhed after this a particular treatiſe in defence of the ſevere ſentence he had pronounced againſt the *fathers*. This ingenious performance was printed at *Amſterdam* in 1720, under the title of *Traité ſur la Morale des Peres*; and is highly worthy of the peruſal of thoſe who have a taſte for this moſt intereſting branch of literature, though they will find in it ſome imputations caſt upon the fathers, againſt which they may be eaſily defended.

writings

writings of the primitive fathers, there are ſeveral ſublime ſentiments, judicious thoughts, and many things that are naturally adapted to form a religious temper, and to excite pious and virtuous affections; while it muſt be confeſſed, on the other hand, that they abound ſtill more with precepts of an exceſſive and unreaſonable auſterity, with ſtoical and academical dictates, vague and indeterminate notions, and, what is yet worſe, with deciſions that are abſolutely falſe, and in evident oppoſition to the precepts of CHRIST. Before the queſtion mentioned above, concerning the merit of the ancient fathers, as moraliſts, be decided, a previous queſtion muſt be determined, *viz.* What is meant by a bad director in point of morals? and, if by ſuch a perſon be meant, one who has no determinate notion of the nature and limits of the duties incumbent upon Chriſtians, no clear and diſtinct ideas of virtue and vice; who has not penetrated the ſpirit and genius of thoſe ſacred books, to which alone we muſt appeal in every diſpute about Chriſtian virtue, and who, in conſequence thereof, fluctuates often in uncertainty, or falls into error in explaining the divine laws, though he may frequently adminiſter ſublime and pathetic inſtruction; if, by a bad guide in morals, ſuch a perſon, as we have now delineated, be meant, then it muſt be confeſſed, that this title belongs indiſputably to many of the fathers.

The double doctrine of certain moraliſts.

XI. The cauſe of morality, and, indeed, of Chriſtianity in general, ſuffered deeply by a capital error which was received in this century; an error admitted without any evil deſign, but yet with the utmoſt imprudence, and which, through every period of the church, even until the preſent time, has produced other errors without number, and multiplied the evils under which the goſpel has ſo often groaned. JESUS CHRIST preſcribed

to

to all his diſciples one and the ſame rule of life and manners. But certain Chriſtian doctors, either through a deſire of imitating the nations among whom they lived, or in conſequence of a natural propenſity to a life of auſterity (which is a diſeaſe not uncommon in *Syria*, *Egypt*, and other eaſtern provinces), were induced to maintain, that CHRIST had eſtabliſhed a *double rule of ſanctity and virtue*, for two different orders of Chriſtians. Of theſe *rules* the *one* was ordinary, the *other* extraordinary; the *one* of a lower dignity, the *other* more ſublime; the *one* for perſons in the active ſcenes of life, the *other* for thoſe, who, in a ſacred retreat, aſpired after the glory of a celeſtial ſtate. In conſequence of this wild ſyſtem, they divided into two parts all thoſe moral doctrines and inſtructions which they had received either by writing or tradition. One of theſe diviſions they called *precepts*, and the other *counſels*. They gave the name of *precepts* to thoſe laws, that were univerſally obligatory upon all orders of men; and that of *counſels* to thoſe that related to Chriſtians of a more ſublime rank, who propoſed to themſelves great and glorious ends, and breathed after an intimate communion with the Supreme Being.

Gives riſe to the Aſcetics.

XII. This *double doctrine* produced, all of a ſudden, a new ſet of men, who made profeſſion of uncommon degrees of ſanctity and virtue, and declared their reſolution of obeying all the *counſels* of CHRIST, in order to their enjoying communion with God here; and alſo, that, after the diſſolution of their mortal bodies, they might aſcend to him with the greater facility, and find nothing to retard their approach to the ſupreme centre of happineſs and perfection. They looked upon themſelves as prohibited the uſe of things, which it was lawful for other Chriſtians to enjoy, ſuch as

CENT. II. PART II.

*wine, fleſh, matrimony*, and *commerce* [*c*]. They thought it their indiſpenſable duty to extenuate the body by watchings, abſtinence, labour, and hunger. They looked for felicity in ſolitary retreats, in deſert places, where, by ſevere and aſſiduous efforts of ſublime meditation, they raiſed the ſoul above all external objects, and all ſenſual pleaſures. Both men and women impoſed upon themſelves the moſt ſevere taſks, the moſt auſtere diſcipline; all which, however the fruit of pious intention, was in the iſſue, extremely detrimental to Chriſtianity. Theſe perſons were called Aſcetics, Σπουδαῖοι Ἐκλεκτοὶ, and philoſophers; nor were they only diſtinguiſhed by their title from other Chriſtians, but alſo by their garb [*d*]. In this century, indeed, ſuch as embraced this auſtere kind of life, ſubmitted themſelves to all theſe mortifications in private, without breaking aſunder their ſocial bonds, or withdrawing themſelves from the concourſe of men. But, in proceſs of time, they retired into deſerts; and, after the example of the Eſſenes and Therapeutæ, they formed themſelves into certain companies.

Why certain Chriſtians became Aſcetics.

XIII. Nothing is more obvious than the reaſons that gave riſe to this auſtere ſect. One of the principal was, the ill-judged ambition of the Chriſtians to reſemble the Greeks and Romans, many of whoſe ſages and philoſophers diſtinguiſhed themſelves from the generality by their maxims, by their habit, and, indeed, by the whole plan of life and manners which they had formed to themſelves, and by which they acquired a high degree of eſteem and authority. It is alſo well known, that, of all theſe philoſophers,

[*c*] ATHENAGORAS, *Apologia pro Chriſtian.* cap. xxviii. p. 129. edit. Oxon.

[*d*] See SALMAS. *Comm. in Tertullianum de Pallio*, p. 7, 8, &c.

there

there were none, whoſe ſentiments and diſcipline were ſo well received by the ancient Chriſtians as thoſe of the Platonics and Pythagoreans, who preſcribed in their leſſons *two* rules of conduct; *one*, for the ſage, who aſpired to the ſublimeſt heights of virtue; and *another* for the people, involved in the cares and hurry of an active life [*e*]. The law of moral conduct, which the Platonics preſcribed to the philoſophers, was as follows: "The ſoul "of the wiſe man ought to be removed to the "greateſt poſſible diſtance from the contagious "influence of the body. And as the depreſſing "weight of the body, the force of its appetites, "and its connexions with a corrupt world, are "in direct oppoſition to this ſacred obligation; "therefore all ſenſual pleaſures are to be care-"fully avoided; the body is to be ſupported, or "rather extenuated, by a ſlender diet; *ſolitude* is "to be ſought as the true manſion of virtue; and "*contemplation* to be employed as the means of "raiſing the ſoul, as far as is poſſible, to a ſub-"lime freedom from all corporeal ties, and to a "noble elevation above all terreſtrial things [*f*]. "The perſon, who lives in this manner, ſhall "enjoy, even in the preſent ſtate, a certain de-"gree of communion with the Deity; and when "the corporeal maſs is diſſolved, ſhall imme-

[*e*] Theſe famous ſects made an important diſtinction between *living according to nature*, Ζῆν κατὰ φύσιν, and *living above nature*, Ζῆν ὑπὲρ φύσιν. The former was the rule preſcribed to the vulgar; the latter that which was to direct the conduct of the philoſophers, who aimed at ſuperior degrees of virtue. See ÆNÆAS GAZEUS *in Theophraſt.* p. 29. edit. Barthii.

[*f*] The reader will find the principles of this fanatical diſcipline, in PORPHYRY's book περὶ ἀποχῆς, i. e. concerning *abſtinence*. That celebrated Platoniſt has explained at large the reſpective duties that belong to *active* and *contemplative* life, book i. § 27. and 41.

CENT. II. PART II.

"diately aſcend to the ſublime regions of felicity "and perfection, without paſſing through that "ſtate of purification and trial, that awaits the "generality of mankind." It is eaſy to perceive, that this rigorous diſcipline was a natural conſequence of the peculiar opinions which theſe philoſophers, and ſome others that reſembled them, entertained, concerning the *nature of the ſoul*, the *influence of matter*, the *operations of inviſible beings or demons*, and the *formation of the world*. And as theſe opinions were adopted by the more learned among the Chriſtians, it was but natural that they ſhould embrace alſo the moral diſcipline which flowed from them.

The progreſs of this diſcipline.

XIV. There is a particular conſideration that will enable us to render a natural account of the origin of thoſe religious ſeverities of which we have been now ſpeaking, and that is drawn from the genius and temper of the people by whom they were firſt practiſed. It was in *Egypt* that this moroſe diſcipline had its riſe; and it is obſervable, that that country has, in all times, as it were by an immutable law, or diſpoſition of nature, abounded with perſons of a melancholy complexion, and produced, in proportion to its extent, more gloomy ſpirits than any other part of the world [g]. It was here that the Eſſenes and the Therapeutæ, thoſe diſmal and gloomy ſects, dwelt principally, long before the coming of CHRIST; as alſo many others of the Aſcetic tribe, who, led by a certain melancholy turn of mind, and a deluſive notion of rendering themſelves more acceptable to the Deity by their auſterities, withdrew themſelves from human ſociety, and from all the innocent pleaſures and comforts of

[g] See MAILLET, *Deſcription de l'Egypte*, tom. ii. p. 57. edit. in 4to. de Paris.

life [*b*]. From *Egypt* this four and unſociable diſcipline paſſed into *Syria*, and the neighbouring countries, which alſo abounded with perſons of the ſame diſmal conſtitution with that of the Egyptians [*i*]; and from thence, in proceſs of time, its infection reached to the European nations. Hence that train of auſtere and ſuperſtitious vows and rites, that yet, in many places, caſt a veil over the beauty and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion. Hence the celibacy of the prieſtly order, the rigour of unprofitable penances and mortifications, the innumerable ſwarms of monks that refuſed their talents and labours to ſociety, and this in the ſenſeleſs purſuit of a viſionary ſort of perfection. Hence alſo that diſtinction between the *theoretical* and *myſtical* life, and many other fancies of a like nature, which we ſhall have occaſion to mention in the courſe of this hiſtory.

The riſe of pious frauds among Chriſtians.

XV. It is generally true, that deluſions travel in a train, and that one miſtake produces many. The Chriſtians, who adopted the auſtere ſyſtem, which has been already mentioned, had certainly made a very falſe ſtep, and done much injury to their excellent and moſt reaſonable religion. But they did not ſtop here; another erroneous practice was adopted by them, which, though it was not ſo univerſal as the other, was yet extremely pernicious, and proved a ſource of numberleſs evils to the Chriſtian church. The Platoniſts and Pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was

[*b*] HERODOT. *Hiſtor.* lib. ii. p. 104. edit. Gronov. EPIPHANIUS, *Expoſit. fidei*, § 11. tom. ii. opp. p. 1092. TERTULLIAN, *De exhortatione caſtitat.* cap. xiii. p. 524. edit. Priorii. ATHANASIUS *in vita Antonii*, tom. ii. opp. p. 453.

[*i*] Jo. CHARDIN *Voyages en Perſe*, tom. iv. p. 197. edit. Amſterd. 1735, 4to.

CENT. II. PART II.

not only lawful, but even praiſe-worthy, to *deceive*, and even to uſe the expedient of a *lie*, in order to advance the cauſe of *truth* and *piety*. The Jews, who lived in *Egypt*, had learned and received this maxim from them, before the coming of CHRIST, as appears inconteſtably from a multitude of ancient records; and the Chriſtians were infected from both theſe ſources with the ſame pernicious error, as appears from the number of books attributed falſely to great and venerable names, from the *Sibylline verſes*, and ſeveral ſuppoſititious productions, which were ſpread abroad in this and the following century. It does not, indeed, ſeem probable, that all theſe *pious frauds* were chargeable upon the profeſſors of *real* Chriſtianity, upon thoſe who entertained juſt and rational ſentiments of the religion of JESUS. The greateſt part of theſe fictitious writings, undoubtedly, flowed from the fertile invention of the Gnoſtic ſects, though it cannot be affirmed that even true Chriſtians were entirely innocent and irreproachable in this matter.

Of the lives of Chriſtians.

XVI. As the boundaries of the church were enlarged, the number of vicious and irregular perſons, who entered into it, were proportionably increaſed, as appears from the many complaints and cenſures that we find in the writers of this century. Several methods were made uſe of to ſtem the torrent of iniquity. *Excommunication* was peculiarly employed to prevent or puniſh the moſt heinous and enormous crimes; and the crimes, eſteemed ſuch, were *murder*, *idolatry*, and *adultery*, which terms, however, we muſt here underſtand in their more full and extenſive ſenſe. In ſome places, the commiſſion of any of theſe ſins cut off irrevocably the criminal from all hopes of reſtoration to the privileges of church-communion: in others, after a long, laborious,

Excommunication.

and

and painful courſe of probation and diſcipline, they were re-admitted into the boſom of the church [*k*].

Penitential diſcipline among the Chriſtians modelled imperceptibly according to that of the Heathen myſteries.

XVII. It is here to be attentively obſerved, that the form uſed in the excluſion of heinous offenders from the ſociety of Chriſtians was, at firſt, extremely ſimple. A ſmall number of plain, yet judicious rules, made up the whole of this ſolemn inſtitution, which, however, was imperceptibly altered, enlarged by an addition of a vaſt multitude of rites, and new-modelled according to the diſcipline uſed in the Heathen myſteries [*l*]. Thoſe who have any acquaintance with the ſingular reaſons that obliged the Chriſtians of thoſe ancient times to be careful in reſtraining the progreſs of vice, will readily grant, that it was incumbent upon the rulers of the church to perfect their diſcipline, and to render the reſtraints upon iniquity more ſevere. They will juſtify the rulers of the primitive church in their refuſing to reſtore excommunicated members to their forfeited privileges, before they had given inconteſtable marks of the ſincerity of their repentance. Yet ſtill it remains to be examined, whether it was expedient to borrow from the enemies of the truth the rules of this ſalutary diſcipline, and thus to ſanctify, in ſome meaſure, a part of the Heathen ſuperſtition. But, however delicate ſuch a queſtion may be, when determined with a view to all the indirect or immediate conſequences of the matter in debate, the equitable and candid judge will conſider prin-

[*k*] By this diſtinction, we may eaſily reconcile the different opinions of the learned concerning the effects of excommunication. See MORINUS, *De diſciplina Pœnitent.* lib. ix. cap. xix. p. 670. SIRMOND, *Hiſtoria Pœnitentiæ publicæ*, cap. i. p. 323. tom. iv. opp. As alſo JOSEPH. AUGUSTIN. ORSI, *Diſſert. de criminum capitalium per tria priora ſæcula abſolutione*, publiſhed at *Milan*, 1730, 4to.

[*l*] See FABRICIUS's *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* p. 397. and MORINUS, *De Pœnitentia*, lib. i. cap. xv, xvi, &c.

CENT. II. PART II.

cipally the good intention of thoſe from whom theſe ceremonies and inſtitutions proceed, and will overlook the reſt from a charitable condeſcenſion and indulgence to human weakneſs.

## CHAP. IV.

### *Of the ceremonies uſed in the church during this century.*

Ceremonies multiplied.

I. THERE is no inſtitution ſo pure and excellent which the corruption and folly of man will not in time alter for the worſe, and load with additions foreign to its nature and original deſign. Such, in a particular manner, was the fate of Chriſtianity. In this century, many unneceſſary rites and ceremonies were added to the Chriſtian worſhip, the introduction of which was extremely offenſive to wiſe and good men [*m*]. Theſe changes, while they deſtroyed the beautiful ſimplicity of the goſpel, were naturally pleaſing to the groſs multitude, who are more delighted with the pomp and ſplendour of external inſtitutions, than with the native charms of rational and ſolid piety, and who generally give little attention to any objects but thoſe which ſtrike their outward ſenſes [*n*]. But other reaſons may

[*m*] TERTULLIAN, *Lib. de Creatione*, p. 792. opp.

☞ [*n*] It is not improper to remark here, that this attachment of the vulgar to the pomp of ceremonies, is a circumſtance that has always been favourable to the ambitious views of the Romiſh clergy, ſince the pomp of religion naturally caſts a part of its glory and magnificence upon its miniſters, and thereby gives them, imperceptibly, a vaſt aſcendant over the minds of the people. The late Lord *Bolingbroke*, being preſent at the elevation of the hoſt in the cathedral at *Paris*, expreſſed to a nobleman, who ſtood near him, his ſurprize that the king of *France* ſhould commit the performance of ſuch an auguſt and ſtriking ceremony to any ſubject. How far ambition.

may be added to this, which, though they ſuppoſe no bad intentions, yet manifeſt a conſiderable degree of precipitation and imprudence.

First reaſons of the multiplication of ceremonies, viz. A deſire to enlarge the borders of the church.

II. And here we may obſerve, in the firſt place, that there is a high degree of probability in the notion of thoſe, who think that the biſhops augmented the number of religious rites in the Chriſtian worſhip, by way of accommodation to the infirmities and prejudices both of Jews and Heathens, in order to facilitate thus their converſion to Chriſtianity. Both Jews and Heathens were accuſtomed to a vaſt variety of pompous and magnificent ceremonies in their religious ſervice. And as they conſidered theſe rites as an eſſential part of religion, it was but natural that they ſhould behold, with indifference, and even with contempt, the ſimplicity of the Chriſtian worſhip, which was deſtitute of thoſe idle ceremonies that rendered their ſervice ſo ſpecious and ſtriking. To remove then, in ſome meaſure, this prejudice againſt Chriſtianity, the biſhops thought it neceſſary to increaſe the number of rites and ceremonies, and thus to render the public worſhip more ſtriking to the outward ſenſes [*o*].

III.

bition may, in this and the ſucceeding ages, have contributed to the accumulation of gaudy ceremonies, is a queſtion not eaſy to be determined.

[*o*] A remarkable paſſage in the life of GREGORY, ſurnamed THAUMATURGUS, *i. e.* the wonder-worker, will illuſtrate this point in the cleareſt manner. The paſſage is as follows: "Cum animadvertiſſet (GREGORIUS) quod ob corpo-
"reas delectationes et voluptates ſimplex et imperitum vulgus
"in ſimulacrorum cultus errore permaneret—permiſit eis, ut
"in memoriam et recordationem ſanctorum martyrum ſeſe
"oblectarent, & in lætitiam effunderentur, quod ſucceſſu
"temporis aliquando futurum eſſet, ut ſua ſponte ad ho-
"neſtiorem et accuratiorem vitæ rationem tranſirent." *i. e.*
"When GREGORY perceived that the ignorant multitude per-
"ſiſted in their idolatry, on account of the pleaſures and
"ſenſual gratifications which they enjoyed at the Pagan
"feſtivals, he granted them a permiſſion to indulge them-
"ſelves

CENT. II. PART II.

Second reason, To refute calumnies and reproaches.

III. This addition of external rites was also designed to remove the opprobrious calumnies, which the Jewish and Pagan priests cast upon the Christians, on account of the simplicity of their worship, esteeming them little better than Atheists, because they had no *temples*, *altars*, *victims*, *priests*, nor any thing of that external pomp in which the vulgar are so prone to place the essence of religion. The rulers of the church adopted, therefore, certain external ceremonies, that thus they might captivate the senses of the vulgar, and be able to refute the reproaches of their adversaries. ☞ This, it must be confessed, was a very aukward, and, indeed, a very pernicious stratagem; it was obscuring the native lustre of the gospel, in order to extend its influence, and making it lose, in point of real excellence, what it gained in point of popular esteem. Some accommodations to the infirmities of mankind, some prudent instances of condescension to their invincible prejudices, are necessary in ecclesiastical, as well as in civil institutions; but they must be of such a nature, as not to inspire ideas, or encourage prejudices incompatible with just sentiments of the great object of religious worship, and of the fundamental truths which God has imparted by reason and revelation to the human race. How far this rule has been disregarded and violated, will appear too plainly in the progress of this history.

Third reason, The abuse of Jewish rites.

IV. A third cause of the multiplication of rites and ceremonies in the Christian church, may be

" selves in the like pleasures, in celebrating the memory of " the holy martyrs, hoping, that, in process of time, they " would return, of their own accord, to a more virtuous and " regular course of life." There is no sort of doubt, but that, by this permission, GREGORY allowed the Christians to dance, sport, and feast, at the tombs of the martyrs, upon their respective festivals, and to do every thing which the Pagans were accustomed to do in their temples, during the feasts celebrated in honour of their gods.

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deduced from the abuſe of certain titles that diſtinguiſhed the ſacerdotal orders among the Jews. Every one knows, that many terms uſed in the New Teſtament, to expreſs the different parts of the Chriſtian doctrine and worſhip, are borrowed from the Jewiſh law, or have a certain analogy with the rites and ceremonies inſtituted by Moses. The Chriſtian doctors did not only imitate this analogical manner of ſpeaking, but they even extended it further than the apoſtles had done. And, though in this there was nothing worthy of reproach, yet the conſequences of this method of ſpeaking became, through abuſe, detrimental to the purity of the goſpel. For, in proceſs of time, many aſſerted, whether through ignorance or artifice, is not eaſy to determine, that theſe forms of ſpeech were not *figurative*, but highly *proper*, and exactly ſuitable to the nature of the things they were deſigned to expreſs. The *biſhops*, by an innocent alluſion to the Jewiſh manner of ſpeaking, had been called *chief prieſts*; the *elders*, or preſbyters, had received the title of *prieſts*, and the *deacons* that of *Levites*. But, in a little time, theſe titles were abuſed by an aſpiring clergy, who thought proper to claim the ſame rank and ſtation, the ſame rights and privileges, that were conferred with thoſe titles upon the miniſters of religion under the Moſaic diſpenſation. Hence the riſe of *tithes*, *firſt fruits*, *ſplendid garments*, and many other circumſtances of external grandeur, by which eccleſiaſtics were eminently diſtinguiſhed. In like manner the compariſon of the Chriſtian *oblations* with the Jewiſh *victims* and *ſacrifices*, produced a multitude of unneceſſary rites, and was the occaſion of introducing that erroneous notion of the *euchariſt*, which repreſents it as a *real ſacrifice*, and not merely as a commemoration of that great *offering*, that was once made upon the croſs for the ſins of mortals.

CENT. II. PART II.

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CENT. II. PART II.

Fourth reason, The imitation of the Heathen mysteries.

V. The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman *mysteries*, and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them, was a further circumstance that induced the Christians to give their religion a *mystic air*, in order to put it upon an equal foot, in point of dignity, with that of the Pagans. For this purpose, they gave the name of *mysteries* to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the holy sacrament with that solemn title. They used in that sacred institution, as also in that of baptism, several of the terms employed in the Heathen *mysteries*; and proceeded so far, at length, as even to adopt some of the rites and ceremonies of which these renowned *mysteries* consisted [*p*]. This imitation began in the eastern provinces; but after the time of ADRIAN, who first introduced the MYSTERIES among the Latins [*q*], it was followed by the Christians, who dwelt in the western parts of the empire. A great part, therefore, of the service of the church, in this century, had a certain air of the Heathen mysteries, and resembled them considerably in many particulars.

Fifth reason, The symbolic manner of teaching in use among the eastern nations.

VI. It may be yet further observed, that the custom of teaching their religious doctrines by *images*, *actions*, *signs*, and other sensible representations, which prevailed among the Egyptians, and, indeed, in almost all the eastern nations, was another cause of the increase of external rites in the church. As there were many persons of narrow capacities, whose comprehension scarcely extended beyond sensible objects, the Christian doctors thought it advisable to instruct such in the essen-

[*p*] See, for many examples of this, ISAAC CASAUBON, *Exercitat.* xvi. *in Annales Baronii*, p. 478, 9, &c. edit. Genev. 1654. TOLLIUS, *Insign. itineris Italici Not.* p. 151. 163. SPANHEIM's Notes to his French translation of JULIAN's *Cæsars*, p. 133, 134. CLARKSON *on Liturgies*, p. 36. 42, 43.

[*q*] SPARTIAN, *Hadrian*, c. xiii. p. xv. edit. of Obrecht.

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tial truths of the goſpel, by placing theſe truths, as it were, before their eyes, under ſenſible images. Thus they adminiſtered *milk* and *honey*, which was the ordinary food of infants, to ſuch as were newly received into the church, ſhewing them, by this ſign, that by their baptiſm they were born again, and were bound to manifeſt the ſimplicity and innocence of infants in their lives and converſations. Certain military rites were borrowed to expreſs the new and ſolemn engagements, by which Chriſtians attached themſelves to CHRIST as their leader and their chief; and the ancient ceremony of *manumiſſion* was uſed to ſignify the liberty of which they were made partakers, in conſequence of their redemption from the guilt and dominion of ſin, and their deliverance from the empire of the prince of darkneſs [*r*].

Sixth reaſon, Prejudices of converted Jews and Gentiles.

VII. If it be conſidered, in the firſt place, that the Chriſtians who compoſed the church, were Jews and Heathens, accuſtomed, from their birth, to various inſignificant ceremonies and ſuperſtitious rites; and if it be alſo conſidered, that ſuch a long courſe of cuſtom and education forms prejudices that are extremely obſtinate and difficult to be conquered, it will then appear, that nothing leſs than a continued miracle could have totally prevented the entrance of all ſuperſtitious mixtures into the Chriſtian worſhip. A ſingle example will tend to the illuſtration of this matter. Before the coming of CHRIST, all the eaſtern nations performed divine worſhip with their faces turned to that part of the heavens where the ſun diſplays his riſing beams. This cuſtom was founded upon a general opinion, that God, whoſe *eſſence* they looked upon to be *light*, and whom they conſidered as circumſcribed within certain limits, dwelt in that part of the firmament, from whence

[*r*] See EDM. MERILDII *Obſervat.* lib. iii. cap. iii.

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CENT. II. PART II.

he ſends forth the ſun, the bright image of his benignity and glory. They, who embraced the Chriſtian religion, rejected, indeed, this groſs error, but they retained the ancient and univerſal cuſtom of worſhipping towards the eaſt, which ſprung from it. Nor is that cuſtom aboliſhed even in our times, but ſtill prevails in a great number of Chriſtian churches. From this ſame ſource aroſe various rites among the Jews, which many Chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe who live in the eaſtern countries, obſerve religiouſly at this very day [*s*].

Of the Chriſtian aſſemblies.

VIII. We ſhall take no more than a brief view of theſe rites and ceremonies, ſince a particular conſideration of them would lead us into endleſs diſcuſſions, and open a field too vaſt to be comprehended in ſuch a compendious hiſtory as we here give of the Chriſtian church. The firſt Chriſtians aſſembled for the purpoſes of divine worſhip, in *private houſes*, in *caves*, and in *vaults*, where the dead were buried. Their meetings were on the *firſt day of the week*; and, in ſome places, they aſſembled alſo upon the *ſeventh*, which was celebrated by the Jews. Many alſo obſerved the *fourth* day of the week, on which CHRIST was betrayed; and the *ſixth*, which was the day of his crucifixion. The hour of the day appointed for holding theſe religious aſſemblies, varied according to the different times and circumſtances of the church; but it was generally in the evening after ſun-ſet, or in the morning before the dawn. During theſe ſacred meetings, prayers were repeated [*t*], the holy ſcriptures were publicly read,

[*s*] See SPENCER, *De legibus ritualibus Hebræorum. Prolegom.* p. 9. edit. Cambridge.

[*t*] There is an excellent account given of theſe prayers, and of the Chriſtian worſhip in general, in TERTULLIAN'S *Apology*, ch. xxxix. which is one of the moſt noble productions of ancient times.

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ſhort diſcourſes, upon the duties of Chriſtians, were addreſſed to the people, hymns were ſung, and a portion of the *oblations*, preſented by the faithful, was employed in the celebration of the Lord's ſupper and the feaſts of charity.

Diſputes about the time of keeping Eaſter, or the paſchal feaſt.

IX. The Chriſtians of this century celebrated anniverſary feſtivals in commemoration of the death and reſurrection of CHRIST, and of the effuſion of the HOLY GHOST upon the apoſtles. The day which was obſerved as the anniverſary of CHRIST's death, was called the *paſchal* day, or paſſover, becauſe it was looked upon to be the ſame with that on which the Jews celebrated the feaſt of that name. In the manner, however, of obſerving this ſolemn day, the Chriſtians of the *Leſſer Aſia* differed much from the reſt, and in a more eſpecial manner from thoſe of *Rome*. They both, indeed, faſted during the *great week* (ſo that was called in which CHRIST died), and afterwards celebrated, like the Jews, a ſacred feaſt, at which they diſtributed a paſchal lamb in memory of our Saviour's laſt ſupper. But the Aſiatic Chriſtians kept this feaſt on the fourteenth day of the firſt Jewiſh month, at the time that the Jews celebrated their paſſover, and, three days after, commemorated the reſurrection of the triumphant Redeemer. They affirmed, that they had derived this cuſtom from the apoſtles JOHN and PHILIP; and pleaded moreover, in its behalf, the example of CHRIST himſelf, who held his *paſchal feaſt* on the ſame day that the Jews celebrated their *paſſover*. The weſtern churches obſerved a different method. They celebrated their *paſchal* feaſt on the night that preceded the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection, and thus connected the commemoration of the Saviour's crucifixion, with that of his victory over death and the grave. Nor did they differ thus from the Aſiatics, without alleging alſo apoſtolic authority for what they did; for they pleaded that

CENT. II. PART II.

of St. PETER and St. PAUL, as a juſtification of their conduct in this matter.

The occaſion of them, and their progreſs.

X. The Aſiatic rule for keeping the *paſchal feaſt*, was attended with two great inconveniencies, to which the Chriſtians at *Alexandria* and *Rome*, and the whole weſtern churches, refuſed to ſubmit. For, in the firſt place, as the Aſiatics celebrated their feſtival the ſame day that CHRIST is ſaid to have ate the paſchal lamb with his diſciples, this occaſioned an inevitable interruption in the faſt of the *great week*, which the other churches looked upon as almoſt criminal, at leaſt as highly indecent. Nor was this the only inconveniency ariſing from this rule; for as they celebrated the memory of CHRIST's reſurrection, preciſely the third day after their paſchal ſupper, it happened, for the moſt part, that this great feſtival (which afterwards was called, by the Latins, *paſcha*, and to which we give the name of *Eaſter*) was held on other days of the week than the *firſt*. This circumſtance was extremely diſpleaſing to, by far, the greateſt part of the Chriſtians, who thought it unlawful to celebrate the reſurrection of our Lord, on any day but *Sunday*, as that was the day on which this glorious event happened. Hence aroſe ſharp and vehement contentions between the Aſiatic and weſtern Chriſtians. About the middle of this century, during the reign of ANTONINUS PIUS, the venerable POLYCARP came to *Rome* to confer with ANICET, biſhop of that ſee, upon this matter, with a view to terminate the warm diſputes it had occaſioned. But this conference, though conducted with great decency and moderation, was without effect. POLYCARP and ANICET were only agreed in this, that the bonds of charity were not to be broken on account of this controverſy; but they continued, at the ſame time, each in their former ſentiments, nor could the Aſiatics be engaged by any arguments to alter

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the rule which they pretended to have received by tradition from St. JOHN [*u*].

XI. Towards the concluſion of this century, VICTOR, biſhop of *Rome*, took it into his head to force the Aſiatic Chriſtians, by the pretended authority of his laws and decrees, to follow the rule which was obſerved by the weſtern churches in this matter. Accordingly, after having taken the advice of ſome foreign biſhops, he wrote an imperious letter to the Aſiatic prelates, commanding them to imitate the example of the weſtern Chriſtians with reſpect to the time of celebrating the feſtival of Eaſter. The Aſiatics anſwered this lordly ſummons by the pen of POLYCRATES, biſhop of *Epheſus*, who declared in their name, and that with great ſpirit and reſolution, that they would by no means depart, in this matter, from the cuſtom handed down to them by their anceſtors. Upon this, the thunder of excommunication began to roar. VICTOR, exaſperated by this reſolute anſwer of the Aſiatic biſhops, broke communion with them, pronounced them unworthy of the name of his brethren, and excluded them from all fellowſhip with the church of *Rome*. This excommunication, indeed, extended no further; nor could it cut off the Aſiatic biſhops from communion with the other churches, whoſe biſhops were far from approving the conduct of VICTOR [*w*]. The progreſs of this violent diſſenſion was ſtopped by the wiſe and moderate remonſtrances, which IRENÆUS, biſhop of *Lyons*, addreſſed to the Roman prelate upon this occaſion, in which he ſhewed him the imprudence and in-

They prevail principally between the Aſiatics and Romans.

[*u*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xiv. p. 127. and lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 193.

[*w*] This whole affair furniſhes a ſtriking argument, among the multitude that may be drawn from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, againſt the ſupremacy and univerſal authority of the biſhop of *Rome*.

CENT. II. PART II.

juſtice of the ſtep he had taken, and alſo by the long letter which the Aſiatic Chriſtians wrote in their own juſtification. In conſequence therefore of this ceſſation of arms, the combatants retained each their own cuſtoms, until the fourth century, when the council of *Nice* aboliſhed that of the Aſiatics, and rendered the time of the celebration of Eaſter the ſame through all the Chriſtian churches [*x*].

The celebration of the Lord's ſupper.

XII. In theſe times, the ſacrament of the Lord's-ſupper was celebrated, for the moſt part, on Sundays, and the ceremonies obſerved upon that occaſion were ſuch as follow: A part of the bread and wine, which was preſented among the other *oblations* of the faithful, was ſeparated from the reſt, and conſecrated by the prayers of the biſhop. The wine was mixed with water, and the bread was divided into ſeveral portions. A part of the conſecrated bread and wine was carried to the ſick or abſent members of the church, as a teſtimony of fraternal love, ſent to them by the whole ſociety [*y*]. It appears by many and undoubted teſtimonies, that this holy rite was looked upon as eſſential to ſalvation; and when this is duly conſidered, we ſhall be leſs diſpoſed to cenſure, as erroneous, the opinion of thoſe who have affirmed that the Lord's-ſupper was ad-

☞ [*x*] Dr. MOSHEIM, in a note here, refers us for an ampler account of this controverſy to his *Commentar. de rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtantinum*, *M.* p. 435. He had ſaid in that work, that FAYDIT had perceived the error of the common opinion, concerning the diſputes that aroſe in the church about the time of keeping Eaſter. But here he retracts this encomium, and, after a ſecond reading of FAYDIT's book, finds himſelf obliged to declare, that that writer has entirely miſſed the true ſtate of the queſtion. See the account of this controverſy, that is given by the learned HEUMAN, in one of the treatiſes of his *Sylloge*, or collection of ſmall pieces.

[*y*] HENRICUS RIXNERUS, *De ritibus veterum Chriſtianorum, circa Euchariſtiam*, p. 155, &c.

miniſtered to infants during this century [z]. The *feaſts of charity*, that followed the celebration of the Lord's-ſupper, have been mentioned already.

Baptiſm.

XIII. The ſacrament of *baptiſm* was adminiſtered publicly twice every year, at the feſtivals of Eaſter and Pentecoſt, or Whitſuntide [a], either by the *biſhop*, or the *preſbyters*, in conſequence of his authorization and appointment. The perſons that were to be baptized, after they had repeated the *Creed*, confeſſed and renounced their ſins, and particularly the *devil*, and his pompous allurements, were immerſed under water, and received into CHRIST's kingdom by a ſolemn invocation of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, according to the expreſs command of our Bleſſed Lord. After baptiſm, they received the *ſign of the croſs*, were *anointed*, and, by *prayers* and *impoſition of hands*, were ſolemnly commended to the mercy of God, and dedicated to his ſervice; in conſequence of which they received *milk* and *honey*, which concluded the ceremony [b]. The reaſons of this particular ritual coincide with what we have ſaid in general concerning the origin and cauſes of the multiplied ceremonies that crept from time to time into the church.

Adult perſons were prepared for baptiſm by abſtinence, prayer, and other pious exerciſes. It was to anſwer for them that ſponſors or godfathers were firſt inſtituted, though they were afterwards admitted alſo in the baptiſm of infants [c].

[z] See JO. FRID. MAYER, *Diſſ. de Euchariſtia Infantum*; as alſo ZORNIUS *Hiſtor. Euchariſt. Infantum*, publiſhed at *Berlin*, 1736.

[a] See WALL's *Hiſtory of Infant Baptiſm*; and VICECOMES's *De ritibus Baptiſmi*.

[b] See TERTULLIAN on Baptiſm.

[c] See GERH. a MASTRICHT, *De ſuſceptoribus infantium ex baptiſmo*; though he is of a different opinion in this matter, and thinks that *ſponſors* were not uſed in the baptiſm of adult

## CHAP. V.

*Concerning the hereſies and diviſions that troubled the church during this century.*

CENT. II. PART II.

I. AMONG the many ſects which divided the Chriſtian church during this century, it is natural to mention, in the firſt place, that which an attachment to the Moſaic law ſeparated from the reſt of their Chriſtian brethren. The firſt riſe of this ſect is placed under the reign of ADRIAN. For, when this emperor had, at length, razed *Jeruſalem*, entirely deſtroyed even its very foundations, and enacted laws of the ſevereſt kind againſt the whole body of the Jewiſh people; the greateſt part of the Chriſtians, who lived in *Paleſtine*, to prevent their being confounded with the Jews, abandoned entirely the Moſaic rites, and choſe a biſhop named MARK, a foreigner by nation, and conſequently an alien from the commonwealth of *Iſrael*. This ſtep was highly ſhocking to thoſe, whoſe attachment to the Moſaic rites was violent and invincible; and ſuch was the caſe of many. Theſe, therefore, ſeparated themſelves from the brethren, and founded at *Pera*, a country of *Paleſtine*, and in the neighbouring parts, particular aſſemblies, in which the law of MOSES maintained its primitive dignity, authority, and luſtre [*d*].

Diſſenſions in the church, occaſioned by the Jews.

Origin of the Nazarenes and Ebionites.

II. This body of judaizing Chriſtians, which ſet CHRIST and MOSES upon an equal foot in

perſons. See alſo WALL's *Hiſtory of Infant Baptiſm.* ☞ See moreover upon this ſubject, ISAACI JUNDT, *Arg. de Suſceptorum Baptiſmalium origine Commentatio*, publiſhed at *Straſburg* in the year 1755, of which an account may be ſeen in the *Biblioth. des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*, tom. vi. part. i. p. 12.

[*d*] Vid. SULPITIUS SEVERUS, *Hiſt. Sacræ*, lib. ii. cap. xxxi. p. 245.

point of authority, was afterwards divided into two ſects, extremely different both in their rites and in their opinions, and diſtinguiſhed by the names of Nazarenes and Ebionites. The former are not placed by the ancient Chriſtians in the heretical regiſter [*e*]; but the latter were conſidered as a ſect, whoſe tenets were deſtructive of the fundamental principles of the Chriſtian religion. Theſe ſects made uſe of a *goſpel*, or hiſtory of CHRIST, different from that which is received among us, and concerning which there have been many diſputes among the learned [*f*]. The term Nazarenes was not originally the name of a ſect, but that which diſtinguiſhed the diſciples of JESUS in general. And as thoſe, whom the Greeks called Chriſtians, received the name of Nazarenes among the Jews, this latter name was not conſidered as a mark of ignominy or contempt. Thoſe, indeed, who, after their ſeparation from their brethren, retained the title of Nazarenes, differed much from the true diſciples of CHRIST, to whom that name had been originally given: "they held, that CHRIST was "born of a virgin, and was alſo in a *certain man-* "*ner* united to the divine nature; they refuſed

[*e*] EPIPHANIUS was the firſt writer who placed the Nazarenes in the liſt of heretics. He wrote in the fourth century, but is very far from being remarkable either for his fidelity or judgment.

☞ [*f*] This goſpel, which was called indiſcriminately the goſpel of the Nazarenes or Hebrews, is certainly the ſame with the goſpel of the Ebionites, the goſpel of the XII apoſtles, and is very probably that which St. PAUL refers to, Galatians, ch. i. ver. 6. Dr. MOSHEIM refers his readers, for an account of this goſpel, to FABRICIUS, in his *Codex Apocryph. Nov. Teſt.* tom. i. p. 355. and to a work of his own, intitled, *Vindiciæ contra Tolandi Nazarenum*, p. 112. The reader will, however, find a ſtill more accurate and ſatisfactory account of this goſpel, in the firſt volume of the learned and judicious Mr. JONES's incomparable *Method of ſettling the Canonical Authority of the New Teſtament.*

"to abandon the ceremonies prescribed by the "law of MOSES, but were far from attempting "to impose the observance of these ceremonies "upon the Gentile Christians; they rejected also "all those additions that were made to the "Mosaic institutions by the Pharisees and the "doctors of the law [g];" and from hence we may easily see the reason why the greatest part of the Christians treated the Nazarenes with a more than ordinary degree of gentleness and forbearance.

Ebionites, their origin doubtful.

III. It is a doubtful matter from whence the Ebionites derived their name, whether from that of some of their principal doctors, or from their poverty [h]. One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that their sentiments and doctrines were much more pernicious than those of the Nazarenes [i]. For though they believed the celestial mission of CHRIST, and his participation of a divine nature, yet they regarded him as a man born of JOSEPH and MARY, according to the ordinary course of nature. They, moreover, asserted, that the ceremonial law, instituted by MOSES, was not only obligatory upon the Jews, but also upon all others; and that the observance of it was essential to salvation. And as St. PAUL had very different sentiments from them,

[g] See MICH. LE QUIEN, *Adnot. ad Damascenum*, tom. i. p. 82, 83; as also a dissertation of the same author, *De Nazarenis et eorum fide*, which is the seventh of those that he has subjoined to his edition of the works of *Damascenus*.

[h] See FABRIC. *ad Philastr. de Hæresibus*, p. 81; as also ITTIGIUS, *De Hæresibus ævi Apostolici*.

☞ [i] The learned Mr. JONES looked upon these two sects as differing very little from one another. He attributes to them both much the same doctrines, and alleges that the Ebionites had only made some small additions to the old Nazarene system. See the *New and full Method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 385.

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concerning the obligation of the ceremonial law, and had oppoſed the obſervance of it in the warmeſt manner, ſo of conſequence they held this apoſtle in abhorrence, and treated his writings with the utmoſt diſreſpect. Nor were they only attached to the rites inſtituted by MOSES; they went ſtill further, and received, with an equal degree of veneration, the ſuperſtitions of their anceſtors, and the ceremonies and traditions which the Phariſees preſumptuouſly added to the law [*k*].

Sects that aroſe from the oriental philoſophy.

IV. Theſe obſcure and unfrequented heretical aſſemblies were very little detrimental to the Chriſtian cauſe, which ſuffered much more from thoſe ſects, whoſe leaders explained the doctrines of Chriſtianity in a manner conformable to the dictates of the oriental philoſophy concerning the origin of evil. The oriental doctors, who, before this century, had lived in the greateſt obſcurity, came forth from their retreat under the reign of ADRIAN [*l*], expoſed themſelves to public view, and gathered together, in various provinces, aſſemblies, whoſe numbers were very conſiderable. The ancient records mention a great number of theſe demi-chriſtian ſects, many of which are no further known than by their diſtinguiſhing names, which, perhaps, is the only circumſtance in which they differ from each other. One diviſion, however, of theſe oriental

[*k*] IRENÆUS, lib. i. *Contra Hæreſ.* cap. xxvi. p. 105. edit. Maſſueti. EPIPHANIUS gives a large account of the Ebionites, *Hæreſ.* xxx. But he deſerves little credit, ſince he confeſſes (§ 3. p. 127. and § 4. p. 141.) that he had confounded the Sampſæans and Elceſaites with the Ebionites, and alſo acknowledges, that the firſt Ebionites were ſtrangers to the errors with which he charges them.

[*l*] CLEMENS ALEX. *Stromat.* lib. viii. cap. xvii. p. 898. CYPRIANUS, epiſt. lxxv.

CENT. II. PART II.

Chriſtians, may be conſidered as real and important, ſince the two branches it produced were vaſtly ſuperior to the reſt in reputation, and made more noiſe in the world, than the other multiplied ſubdiviſions of this pernicious ſect. Of this famous diviſion, one branch, which aroſe in *Aſia*, preſerved the oriental doctrine concerning the origin of the world, unmixed with other ſentiments and opinions; while the other, which was formed in *Egypt*, made a motley mixture of this philoſophy with the tenets and prodigies adopted in the religious ſyſtem of that ſuperſtitious country. The doctrine of the former ſurpaſſed in ſimplicity and perſpicuity that of the latter, which conſiſted of a vaſt variety of parts, ſo artfully combined, that the explication of them became a matter of much difficulty.

The Aſiatic.

Elxai and his followers.

V. Among the doctors of the Aſiatic branch, the firſt place is due to ELXAI, a Jew, who, during the reign of TRAJAN, is ſaid to have formed the ſect of the Elceſaites. This heretic, though a Jew, attached to the worſhip of one God, and full of veneration for MOSES, corrupted, nevertheleſs, the religion of his anceſtors, by blending with it a multitude of fictions drawn from the oriental philoſophy; pretending alſo, after the example of the Eſſenes, to give a rational explication of the law of MOSES, he reduced it to a mere allegory. It is, at the ſame time, proper to obſerve, that ſome have doubted, whether the Elceſaites are to be reckoned among the Chriſtian or the Jewiſh ſects; and EPIPHANIUS, who was acquainted with a certain production of ELXAI, expreſſes his uncertainty in this matter. ELXAI, indeed, in that book mentions CHRIST with the higheſt encomiums, without, however, adding any circumſtance from whence it might be concluded with certainty, that JESUS

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of Nazareth was the CHRIST of whom he ſpoke [*m*].

VI. If then ELXAI be improperly placed among the leaders of the ſect now under conſideration, we may place at its head SATURNINUS of *Antioch*, who is one of the firſt Gnoſtic chiefs mentioned in hiſtory. He held the doctrine of *two principles*, from whence proceeded all things; the one *a wiſe* and *benevolent deity*; and the other, *matter, a principle eſſentially evil*, and which he ſuppoſed under the ſuperintendence of a certain intelligence of a malignant nature. "The world "and its firſt inhabitants were (according to the "ſyſtem of this raving philoſopher) created by "ſeven angels, which preſided over the ſeven "planets. This work was carried on without "the knowledge of the *benevolent deity*, and in "oppoſition to the will of the *material principle*. "The former, however, beheld it with appro- "bation, and honoured it with ſeveral marks of "his beneficence. He endowed with rational "ſouls the beings who inhabited this new "ſyſtem, to whom their creators had imparted "nothing more than the mere animal life; and "having divided the world into ſeven parts, he "diſtributed them among the ſeven *angelic archi- "tects*, one of whom was the god of the Jews; "and reſerved to himſelf the ſupreme empire "over all. To theſe creatures, whom the *bene- "volent principle* had endowed with reaſonable "ſouls, and with diſpoſitions that led to good- "neſs and virtue, the *evil being*, to maintain his "empire, added another kind, whom he formed "of a wicked and malignant character; and "hence the difference we ſee among men. When

Saturninus, his extravagant fancies.

[*m*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xxxviii. p. 234. EPIPHANIUS, *Hæreſ.* xix. § 3. p. 41. THEODORETUS, *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. ii. cap. vii. p. 221.

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CENT. II. PART II

"the creators of the world fell from their allegiance to the Supreme Deity, GOD ſent from heaven into our globe, a *reſtorer of order*, whoſe name was CHRIST. This divine conqueror came clothed with a corporeal appearance, but not with a *real* body; he came to deſtroy the empire of the *material principle*, and to point out to virtuous ſouls the way by which they muſt return to God. This way is beſet with difficulties and ſufferings; ſince thoſe ſouls, who propoſe returning to the Supreme Being after the diſſolution of this mortal body, muſt abſtain from wine, fleſh, wedlock, and, in ſhort, from every thing that tends to ſenſual gratification, or even bodily refreſhment." SATURNINUS, taught theſe extravagant doctrines in *Syria*, but principally at *Antioch*, and drew after him many diſciples by the pompous appearance of an extraordinary virtue [*n*].

Cerdo. Marcion.

VII. CERDO the Syrian, and MARCION, ſon to the biſhop of Pontus, belong to the Aſiatic ſect, though they began to eſtabliſh their doctrine at *Rome*, and having given a turn ſomewhat different to the oriental ſuperſtition, may themſelves be conſidered as the heads of a new ſect which bears their names. Amidſt the obſcurity and doubts that render ſo uncertain the hiſtory of theſe two men, the following fact is inconteſtable, *viz.* That CERDO had been ſpreading his doctrine at *Rome* before the arrival of MARCION there; and that the latter having, through his own miſconduct, forfeited a place to which he aſpired in the church of *Rome*, attached himſelf, through reſentment, to the impoſtor CERDO, and propagated his impious doctrines with an aſtoniſh-

[*n*] IRENÆUS, lib. i. c. xxiv. EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. vii. THEODORET. *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. i. cap. ii. EPIPHAN. *Hæreſ.* xxiii. THEODORET. *Fabul. Hær.* lib. i. cap. ii.

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ing ſucceſs throughout the world. "After the "example of the oriental doctors, they held the "exiſtence of *two principles*, the one perfectly "*good*, and the other perfectly *evil*. Between "theſe, they imagined an *intermediate kind of* "*deity*, neither perfectly good nor perfectly "evil, but *of a mixed nature* (ſo MARCION ex-"preſſes it), and ſo far juſt and powerful, as to "adminiſter rewards and inflict puniſhments. "This *middle deity* is the creator of this inferior "world, and the *God and legiſlator of the Jewiſh* "*nation*; he wages perpetual war with the *evil* "*principle*; and both the one and the other aſpire "to the place of the Supreme Being, and ambi-"tiouſly attempt ſubjecting to their authority all "the inhabitants of the world. The Jews are "the ſubjects of that powerful *genius* who formed "this globe: the other nations, who worſhip a "variety of gods, are under the empire of the "*evil principle*. Both theſe conflicting powers "exerciſe oppreſſions upon rational and immor-"tal ſouls, and keep them in a tedious and mi-"ſerable captivity. Therefore the SUPREME "GOD, in order to terminate this war, and to "deliver from their bondage thoſe ſouls whoſe "origin is celeſtial and divine, ſent to the Jews "a *being* moſt like unto himſelf, even his ſon "JESUS CHRIST, clothed with a certain ſhadowy "reſemblance of a body, that thus he might be "viſible to mortal eyes. The commiſſion of this "celeſtial meſſenger was to deſtroy the empire "both of the *evil principle*, and of the *author of* "*this world*, and to bring back wandering ſouls "to God. On this account, he was attacked "with inexpreſſible violence and fury by the "*prince of darkneſs*, and by the *God of the Jews*, "but without effect, ſince, having a body only in "appearance, he was thereby rendered incapable "of ſuffering. Thoſe who follow the ſacred

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CENT. II. PART II.

"directions of this celeſtial conductor, mortify "the body by faſtings and auſterities, call off "their minds from the allurements of ſenſe, and, "renouncing the precepts of the god of the "Jews, and of the prince of darkneſs, turn their "eyes towards the Supreme Being, ſhall, after "death, aſcend to the manſions of felicity and "perfection." In conſequence of all this, the rule of manners, which MARCION preſcribed to his followers, was exceſſively auſtere, containing an expreſs prohibition of wedlock, of the uſe of wine, fleſh, and of all the external comforts of life. Notwithſtanding the rigour of this ſevere diſcipline, great numbers embraced the doctrines of MARCION, of whom LUCAN, or LUCIAN, SEVERUS, BLASTES, and principally APELLES, are ſaid to have varied, in ſome things, from the opinions of their maſter, and to have formed new ſects [*o*].

Bardeſanes.

VIII. BARDESANES and TATIAN are commonly ſuppoſed to have been of the ſchool of VALENTINE the Egyptian. But this notion is entirely without foundation, ſince their doctrine differs in many things from that of the VALENTINIANS, approaching nearer to that of the oriental philoſophy concerning the *two principles*. BARDESANES, native of *Edeſſa*, was a man of a very acute genius, and acquired a ſhining reputation by his writings, which were in great number, and valuable for the profound erudition they contained. Seduced by the fantaſtic charms of the oriental philoſophy, he adopted it with zeal, but, at the ſame time, with certain modifications,

[*o*] See IRENÆUS, EPIPHANIUS, and particularly TERTULLIAN's *Five Books againſt the Marcionites*, with his *Poem againſt* MARCION, and the *Dialogue againſt the Marcionites*, which is generally aſcribed to ORIGEN. See alſo TILLEMONT's *Memoires*, and BEAUSOBRE's *Hiſtoire du Manicheiſme*, tom. ii. p. 69.

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that rendered his ſyſtem leſs extravagant than that of the Marcionites, againſt whom he wrote a very learned treatiſe. The ſum of his doctrine is as follows: "There is a SUPREME GOD, pure "and benevolent, abſolutely free from all evil "and imperfection; and there is alſo a *prince of* "*darkneſs*, the fountain of all evil, diſorder, and "miſery. The Supreme God created the world "without any mixture of evil in its compoſition; "he gave exiſtence alſo to its inhabitants, who "came out of his forming hand, pure and incor- "rupt, endued with ſubtle ethereal bodies, and "ſpirits of a celeſtial nature. But when, in "proceſs of time, *the prince of darkneſs* had en- "ticed men to ſin, then the SUPREME GOD per- "mitted them to fall into ſluggiſh and groſs "bodies, formed of corrupt matter by the *evil* "*principle*; he permitted alſo the depravation "and diſorder which this malignant being intro- "duced both into the natural and the moral "world, deſigning, by this permiſſion, to puniſh "the degeneracy and rebellion of an apoſtate "race; and hence proceeds the perpetual con- "flict between reaſon and paſſion in the mind of "man. It was on this account, that JESUS "deſcended from the upper regions, clothed "not with a real, but with a celeſtial and aërial "body, and taught mankind to ſubdue that "body of corruption which they carry about "with them in this mortal life; and, by *abſti-* "*nence*, *faſting*, and *contemplation*, to diſengage "themſelves from the ſervitude and dominion of "that *malignant matter*, which chained down the "ſoul to low and ignoble purſuits. Thoſe, who "hear the voice of this divine inſtructor, and "ſubmit themſelves to his diſcipline, ſhall, after "the diſſolution of this terreſtrial body, mount "up to the manſions of felicity, clothed with "æthereal vehicles, or celeſtial bodies." Such

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CENT. II. PART II.

was the doctrine of BARDESANES, who afterwards abandoned the chimerical part of this ſyſtem, and returned to a better mind; though his ſect ſubſiſted a long time in *Syria* [*p*].

Tatian.

IX. TATIAN, by birth an Aſſyrian, and a diſciple of JUSTIN MARTYR, is more diſtinguiſhed, by the ancient writers, on account of his genius and learning, and the exceſſive and incredible auſterity of his life and manners, than by any remarkable errors or opinions which he taught his followers. It appears, however, from the teſtimony of credible writers, that TATIAN looked upon *matter* as the fountain of all evil, and therefore recommended, in a particular manner, the mortification of the body; that he diſtinguiſhed the creator of the world from the Supreme Being; denied the reality of CHRIST's body; and corrupted the Chriſtian religion with ſeveral other tenets of the oriental philoſophy. He had a great number of followers, who were, after him, called Tatianiſts [*q*], but were, nevertheleſs, more frequently diſtinguiſhed from other ſects by names relative to the auſterity of their manners. For as they rejected, with a ſort of horror, all the comforts and conveniencies of life, and abſtained from wine with ſuch a rigorous obſtinacy, as to uſe nothing but water even at the celebration of the Lord's-ſupper; as they macerated their

[*p*] See the writers that give accounts of the ancient hereſies, as alſo EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xxx. p. 151. ORIGEN, *Dial. contra Marcionitas*, § 3. p. 70. edit. Wetſtenii. FRID. STRUNZII, *Hiſt. Bardeſanis*, &c. BRAUSOBRE, *Hiſt. du Manich.* vol. ii. p. 128.

[*q*] We have yet remaining of the writings of TATIAN, an *Oration* addreſſed to the Greeks. As to his opinions, they may be gathered from CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 460. EPIPHANIUS, *Hæreſ.* xlvi. cap. i. p. 391. ORIGEN, *De oratione*, cap. xiii. p. 77, of the *Oxford* edition. None, however, of the ancients have written profeſſedly concerning the doctrines of TATIAN.

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bodies by continual faſtings, and lived a ſevere life of celibacy and abſtinence, ſo they were called Encratites *, Hydroparaſtates †, and Apotactites ‡.

X. Hitherto, we have only conſidered the doctrine of the Aſiatic Gnoſtics. Thoſe of the Egyptian branch differ from them in general in this, that they blended into one maſs the oriental philoſophy and the Egyptian theology; the former of which the Aſiatics preſerved unmixed in its original ſimplicity. The Egyptians were, moreover, particularly diſtinguiſhed from the Aſiatic Gnoſtics, by the following difference in their religious ſyſtem, *viz.* 1. That though, beſides the exiſtence of a *deity*, they maintained that alſo of an *eternal matter*, endued with life and motion, yet they did not acknowledge an *eternal principle of darkneſs*, or the evil principle of the Perſians. 2. They ſuppoſed that our Bleſſed Saviour was a compound of two perſons, of the man JESUS, and of CHRIST the ſon of God; that the divine nature entered into the man JESUS, when he was baptiſed by JOHN in the river *Jordan*, and departed from him when he was ſeized by the Jews. 3. They attributed to CHRIST a real, not an imaginary body; though it muſt be confeſſed, that they were much divided in their ſentiments on this head. 4. Their diſcipline, with reſpect to life and manners, was much leſs ſevere than thoſe of the Aſiatic ſect, and ſeems, in ſome points, to have been favourable to the corruption and paſſions of men.

The peculiar ſentiments of the Egyptian Gnoſtics.

XI. BASILIDES has generally obtained the firſt place among the Egyptian Gnoſtics. "He acknowledged the exiſtence of one Supreme God, perfect in goodneſs and wiſdom, who produced from his own ſubſtance ſeven beings, or æons, of a moſt excellent nature. Two of theſe æons, called *Dynamis* and *Sophia* (i. e. *power* and *wiſdom*), engendered the angels of the

Baſilides.

* Or temperate. † Or drinkers of water. ‡ Renouncers.

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"highest order. These angels formed an heaven "for their habitation, and brought forth other "angelic beings, of a nature somewhat inferior "to their own. Many other generations of an- "gels followed these, new heavens were also "created, until the number of angelic orders, "and of their respective heavens, amounted to "*three hundred and sixty-five*, and thus equalled "the days of the year. All these are under the "empire of an omnipotent Lord, whom BASILI- "DES called *Abraxas*." This word (which was certainly in use among the Egyptians before his time) contains numeral letters to the amount of 365, and thereby expresses the number of heavens and angelic orders above mentioned [*r*]. "The "inha-

[*r*] We have remaining a great number of gems, and receive more from *Egypt* from time to time, on which, beside other figures of Egyptian taste, we find the word ABRAXAS engraved. See, for this purpose, a work entitled, MACARII *Abraxas, seu de gemmis Basilidianis disquisitio*, which was published at *Antwerp*, with several improvements by Jo. CHIFLETIUS, in 4to. in 1657. See also MONTFAUCON, *Palæograph. Græc.* lib. ii. cap. viii. p. 177. All these gems are supposed to come from BASILIDES, and therefore bear his name. Most of them, however, contain the marks of a superstition too gross to be attributed even to an half Christian, and bear also emblematic characters of the Egyptian theology. It is not, therefore, just to attribute them all to BASILIDES (who, though erroneous in many of his opinions, was yet a follower of CHRIST), but such of them only as carry some mark of the Christian doctrine and discipline.—There is no doubt, but that the old Egyptian word ABRAXAS was appropriated to the governor or lord of the heavens, and that BASILIDES, having learned it from the philosophy of his nation, retained it in his religious system. See BEAUSOBRE, *Hist. du Manicheisme*, vol. ii. p. 51. and also Jo. BAPT. PASSERI, in his *Dissert. de gemmis Basilidianis*, which makes a part of that splendid work which he published at *Florence*, 1750, *De gemmis stelliferis*, tom. ii. p. 221. See also the sentiments of the learned JABLONSKI, concerning the signification of the word ABRAXAS, as they are delivered in a dissertation inserted in the seventh volume of the *Miscell. Leips. Nova.* PASSERIUS affirms, that none of these gems relate to BASILIDES, but that they concern only magicians, *i. e.* forcerers, fortune-tellers, and such-like adventurers.

"inhabitants of the loweſt heavens, which "touched upon the borders of the eternal, ma- "lignant, and ſelf-animated *matter*, conceived "the deſign of forming a world from that con- "fuſed maſs, and of creating an order of be- "ings to people it. This deſign was carried into "execution, and was approved by the SUPREME "GOD, who, to the animal life, with which only "the inhabitants of this new world were at firſt "endowed, added a reaſonable ſoul, giving, at "the ſame time, to the angels, the empire over "them."

The enormous errors of his ſyſtem.

XII. "Theſe angelic beings, advanced to the "government of the world which they had created, "fell, by degrees, from their original purity, and "manifeſted ſoon the fatal marks of their depra- "vity and corruption. They not only endea- "voured to efface in the minds of men the know- "ledge of the Supreme Being, that they might "be worſhipped in his ſtead, but alſo began to "war againſt one another, with an ambitious "view to enlarge, every one, the bounds of his "reſpective dominion. The moſt arrogant and "turbulent of all theſe angelic ſpirits, was that "which preſided over the Jewiſh nation. Hence "the Supreme God, beholding with compaſſion "the miſerable ſtate of rational beings, who "groaned under the conteſts of theſe jarring "powers, ſent from heaven his ſon NUS, or "CHRIST, the chief of the *æons*, that, joined in "a ſubſtantial union with the man JESUS, he "might reſtore the knowledge of the Supreme "God, deſtroy the empire of thoſe angelic na-

venturers. Here, however, this learned man ſeems to go too far, ſince he himſelf acknowledges (p. 225.) that *he had ſometimes found, on theſe gems, veſtiges of the errors of* BASILIDES. Theſe famous monuments ſtand yet in need of an interpreter, but of ſuch a one as can join circumſpection to diligence and erudition.

"tures which preſided over the world, and particularly that of the arrogant leader of the Jewiſh people. The god of the Jews, alarmed at this, ſent forth his miniſters to ſeize the man JESUS, and put him to death. They executed his commands, but their cruelty could not extend to CHRIST, againſt whom their efforts were vain [s]. Thoſe ſouls, who obey the precepts of the ſon of God, ſhall, after the diſſolution of their mortal frame, aſcend to the father; while their bodies return to the corrupt maſs of matter from whence they were formed. Diſobedient ſpirits, on the contrary, ſhall paſs ſucceſſively into other bodies."

The moral doctrine of Baſilides.

XIII. The doctrine of BASILIDES, in point of morals, if we may credit the account of moſt ancient writers, was favourable to the luſts and paſſions of mankind, and permitted the practice of all ſorts of wickedneſs. But thoſe, whoſe teſtimonies are the moſt worthy of regard, give a quite different account of this teacher, and repreſent him as recommending the practice of virtue and piety in the ſtrongeſt manner, and as having condemned not only the actual commiſſion of iniquity, but even every inward propenſity of the mind to a vicious conduct. It is true, there were, in his precepts relating to the conduct of life, ſome things which gave great offence to all true Chriſtians. For he affirmed it to be lawful for them to conceal their religion, to deny CHRIST, when their lives

[s] Many of the ancients have, upon the authority of IRENÆUS, accuſed BASILIDES of denying the reality of CHRIST's body, and of maintaining that SIMON the Cyrenian was crucified in his ſtead. But this accuſation is entirely groundleſs, as may be ſeen by conſulting the *Commentar. de rebus Chriſtian. ante Conſtant.* p. 354, &c. &c. where it is demonſtrated, that BASILIDES conſidered the divine Saviour as compounded of the man JESUS, and CHRIST the Son of God. It may be indeed, that ſome of the diſciples of BASILIDES entertained the opinion that is here unjuſtly attributed to their maſter.

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were in danger, and to partake of the feaſts of the Gentiles that were inſtituted in conſequence of the ſacrifices offered to idols. He endeavoured alſo to diminiſh the glory of thoſe who ſuffered martyrdom for the cauſe of CHRIST; impiouſly maintained, that they were more heinous ſinners than others, and that their ſufferings were to be looked upon as a puniſhment inflicted upon them by the divine juſtice. Though he was led into this enormous error, by an abſurd notion that all the calamities of this life were of a penal nature, and that men never ſuffered but in conſequence of their iniquities, yet this rendered his principles greatly ſuſpected, and the irregular lives of ſome of his diſciples ſeemed to juſtify the unfavourable opinion that was entertained concerning their maſter [*t*]. CENT. II. PART II.

XIV. But whatever may be ſaid of BASILIDES, it is certain, that he was far ſurpaſſed in impiety by CARPOCRATES, who was alſo of *Alexandria*, and who carried the Gnoſtic blaſphemies to a more enormous degree of extravagance than they had ever been brought by any of that ſect. His philoſophical tenets agree, in general, with thoſe of the Egyptian Gnoſtics. He acknowledged the exiſtence of a SUPREME GOD, and of the *æons* derived from him by ſucceſſive generations. He maintained the eternity of a *corrupt matter*, and the creation of the world from thence by angelic powers, as alſo the divine origin of ſouls unhappily impriſoned in mortal bodies, *&c.* But beſide theſe, he propagated other ſentiments and maxims of a horrid kind. He aſſerted that JESUS was born of JOSEPH and MARY, according to the ordinary courſe of nature, and was diſtinguiſhed from the Carpocrates.

[*t*] For a further account of BASILIDES, the reader may conſult REN. MASSUET, *Diſſert. in Irenæum*, and BEAUSOBRE, *Hiſt. du Manicheiſme*; vol. ii. p. 8.

CENT. II. PART II.

reſt of mankind by nothing but his ſuperior fortitude and greatneſs of ſoul. His doctrine alſo, with reſpect to practice, was licentious in the higheſt degree; for he not only allowed his diſciples a full liberty to ſin, but recommended to them a vicious courſe of life, as a matter both of obligation and neceſſity; aſſerting, that eternal ſalvation was only attainable by thoſe who had committed all ſorts of crimes, and had daringly filled up the meaſure of iniquity. It is almoſt incredible, that one who maintained the exiſtence of a Supreme Being, who acknowledged CHRIST as the Saviour of mankind, could entertain ſuch monſtrous opinions as theſe. One would infer, indeed, from certain tenets of CARPOCRATES, that he adopted the common doctrine of the Gnoſtics concerning CHRIST, and acknowledged alſo the laws which this divine Saviour impoſed upon his diſciples. But notwithſtanding this, it is beyond all doubt, that the precepts and opinions of this Gnoſtic are full of impiety; ſince he held that luſts and paſſions, being implanted in our nature by God himſelf, were conſequently void of guilt, and had nothing criminal in them; that all actions were indifferent in their own nature, and were rendered good or evil only by the opinions of men, or by the laws of the ſtate; that it was the will of God, that all things ſhould be poſſeſſed in common, the female ſex not excepted; but that human laws, by an arbitrary tyranny, branded thoſe as robbers and adulterers, who only uſed their natural rights. It is eaſy to perceive, that, by theſe tenets, all the principles of virtue were deſtroyed, and a door opened to the moſt horrid licentiouſneſs, and to the moſt profligate and enormous wickedneſs [*u*].

[*u*] See IREN. *Contra Hæreſ.* cap. XXV. CLEMENS ALEX. *Stromata*, lib. iii. p. 511.

XV. VA-

Valentine.

XV. VALENTINE, who was likewiſe an Egyptian by birth, was eminently diſtinguiſhed from all his brethren by the extent of his fame, and the multitude of his followers. His ſect, which took riſe at *Rome*, grew up to a ſtate of conſiſtence and vigour in the iſle of *Cyprus*, and ſpread itſelf through *Aſia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, with an amazing rapidity. The principles of VALENTINE were, generally ſpeaking, the ſame with thoſe of the Gnoſtics, whoſe name he aſſumed, yet in many things he entertained opinions that were particular to himſelf. "He placed, for inſtance, in the "*pleroma* (ſo the Gnoſtics called the habitation "of the deity) thirty *æons*, of which the one half "were male, and the other female. To theſe "he added four others, which were of neither "ſex, *viz.* *Horus*, who guarded the borders of "the *pleroma*, CHRIST, *the Holy Ghoſt*, and JESUS. "The youngeſt of the *æons*, called *Sophia* (i. e. "wiſdom), conceived an ardent deſire of com-"prehending the nature of the SUPREME BEING, "and, by the force of this propenſity, brought "forth a daughter, named *Achamoth*. *Achamoth*, "being exiled from the *pleroma*, fell down into "the rude and undigeſted maſs of matter, to "which ſhe gave a certain arrangement; and, "by the aſſiſtance of JESUS, produced the *demi-*"*urge*, the lord and creator of all things. This "*demiurge* ſeparated the ſubtile or *animal* matter "from that of the groſſer, or more *terreſtrial* "kind; out of the former he created the ſuperior "world, or the viſible heavens; and out of the "latter he formed the inferior world, or this "terraqueous globe. He alſo made man, in "whoſe compoſition the ſubtile and alſo the "groſſer matter were both united, and that in "equal portions; but *Achamoth*, the mother of "*demiurge*, added to theſe two ſubſtances, of "which the human race was formed, *a ſpiritual*

CENT. II. PART II.

"*and celeſtial ſubſtance.*" This is the ſum of that intricate and tedious fable, that the extravagant brain of VALENTINE impoſed upon the world for a ſyſtem of religious philoſophy; and from this it appears, that, though he explained the origin of the world and of the human race in a more ſubtle manner than the other Gnoſtics, yet he did not differ from them in reality. His imagination was more wild and inventive than that of his brethren; and this is manifeſt in the whole of his doctrine, which is no more than Gnoſticiſm, ſet out with ſome ſupernumerary fringes, as will further appear from what follows.

His idle dreams.

XVI. "The creator of this world, according to "VALENTINE, arrived, by degrees, to that pitch "of arrogance, that he either imagined himſelf "to be God alone, or, at leaſt, was deſirous that "mankind ſhould conſider him as ſuch. For this "purpoſe, he ſent forth prophets to the Jewiſh "nation, to declare his claim to the honour that "is due to the Supreme Being, and in this alſo "the other angels that preſide over the different "parts of the univerſe immediately ſet them-"ſelves to imitate his ambition. To chaſtiſe this "lawleſs arrogance of *demiurge*, and to illuminate "the minds of rational beings with the knowledge "of the true and ſupreme Deity, CHRIST appeared "upon earth, compoſed of an animal and ſpi-"ritual ſubſtance, and clothed, moreover, with "an aërial body. This Redeemer, in deſcending "upon earth, paſſed through the womb of MA-"RY, as the pure water flows through the un-"tainted conduit. JESUS, one of the ſupreme "*æons*, was ſubſtantially united to him, when "he was baptized by JOHN in the waters of *Jor-"dan*. The creator of this world, when he per-"ceived that the foundations of his empire were "ſhaken by this divine man, cauſed him to be "apprehended and nailed to the croſs. But be-

" fore CHRIST ſubmitted to this puniſhment, not
" only JESUS the ſon of God, but alſo the ra-
" tional ſoul of CHRIST, aſcended up on high,
" ſo that only the animal ſoul and the etherial
" body ſuffered crucifixion. Thoſe who, aban-
" doning the ſervice of falſe deities and the wor-
" ſhip of the God of the Jews, live according to
" the precepts of CHRIST, and ſubmit the ani-
" mal and ſenſual ſoul to the diſcipline of reaſon,
" ſhall be truly happy: their rational and alſo their
" ſenſual ſouls ſhall aſcend to thoſe glorious ſeats
" of bliſs which border on the *pleroma*; and when
" all the parts of the divine nature, or all ſouls are
" purified thoroughly and ſeparated from *matter*,
" then a raging fire, let looſe from its priſon, ſhall
" ſpread its flame throughout the univerſe, and
" diſſolve the frame of this corporeal world."
Such is the doctrine of VALENTINE, and the Gnoſtics; ſuch alſo are the tenets of the oriental philoſophy, and they may be ſummed up in the following propoſitions: *This world is a compound of good and evil. Whatever is good in it, comes down from the Supreme God, the father of lights, and to him it ſhall return: and then the world ſhall be entirely deſtroyed* [*w*].

XVII.

[*w*] It is proper to obſerve, for the information of thoſe who deſire a more copious account of the Valentinian hereſy, that almoſt all the ancient writers have written upon this ſubject, eſpecially IRENÆUS, *Libro primo contra Hæreſ.* TERTULLIAN, in a particular treatiſe upon that matter; CLEMENS ALEX. &c. Among the moderns, ſee JO. FRANC. BUDDÆUS, *Diſſert. de hæreſi Valentiniana*, in his introduction to his hiſtory of the Hebrew philoſophers, which diſſertation gave occaſion to many diſputes concerning the origin of this hereſy. Some of the moderns have endeavoured to reconcile, with reaſon, this obſcure and abſurd doctrine of the Valentinians. See, for this purpoſe, the following authors: SOUVERAIN *Platoniſme devoilé*, ch. viii. p. 68. CAMP. VITRINGA, *Obſerv. Sacr.* lib. i. cap. ii. p. 131. BEAUSOBRE, *Hiſtoire du Manicheiſme*, p. 548. JAC. BASNAGE, *Hiſt. des Juifs*, tom. iii. p. 729. PEIR. FAYDIT, *Eclairciſſemens ſur l'Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. des deux premiers*

CENT. II. PART II.

Various ſects of the Valentinians.

The greater.

XVII. We learn from ancient writers, that the ſect of the Valentinians was divided into many branches. One of theſe was the ſect of the Ptolemaites, ſo called from their chief PTOLEMY, who differed in opinion from his maſter VALENTINE, with reſpect both to the number and nature of the *æons*. Another of theſe was the ſect of the Secundians, whoſe chief SECUNDUS, one of the principal followers of VALENTINE, maintained the doctrine of two eternal principles, *viz. light* and *darkneſs*, from whence aroſe the good and the evil that are obſervable in the univerſe. From the ſame ſource aroſe the ſect of HERACLEON, from whoſe writings CLEMENS and ORIGEN have made many extracts; as alſo that of the Marcoſians, whoſe leaders MARC and COLOBARSUS added many abſurd fictions to thoſe of VALENTINE; though it is certain, at the ſame time, that many errors were attributed to them, which they did not maintain [*x*]. I omit the mention of ſome other ſects, to which the Valentinian hereſy is ſaid to have given riſe. Whether, in reality, they all ſprung from this ſource, is a queſtion of a very doubtful kind, eſpecially if we conſider the errors into which the ancients have fallen, in tracing out the origin of the various ſects that divided the church [*y*].

XVIII.

*premiers Siecles*. How vain all ſuch endeavours are, might eaſily be ſhewn; nay, VALENTINE himſelf has determined the matter, by acknowledging that his doctrine is abſolutely and entirely different from that of other Chriſtians.

☞ [*x*] MARC did not certainly entertain all the opinions that are attributed to him. Thoſe, however, which we are certain that he adopted, are ſufficient to convince us that he was out of his ſenſes. He maintained, among other crude fancies, that the *plenitude* and *perfection* of truth reſided in the Greek *alphabet*; and alleges that, as the reaſon why JESUS CHRIST was called the *Alpha* and the *Omega*.

[*y*] Concerning theſe ſects, the reader will find ſomething fuller in IRENÆUS, and the other ancient writers; and a yet more learned and ſatisfactory account in GRABE's *Spicilegium Patr.*

XVIII. It is not neceſſary to take any particular notice of the more obſcure and leſs conſiderable of the Gnoſtic ſects, of which the ancient writers ſcarcely mention any thing but the name, and one or two of their diſtinguiſhing tenets. Such were the Adamites, who are ſaid to have profeſſed an exact imitation of the primitive ſtate of innocence; the Cainites, who treated as ſaints, with the utmoſt marks of admiration and reſpect, CAIN, CORAH, DATHAN, the inhabitants of SODOM, and even the traitor JUDAS. Such alſo were the Abelites, who entered into the bonds of matrimony, but neglected to fulfil its principal end, even the procreation of offspring; the Sethites, who honoured SETH in a particular manner, and looked upon him as the ſame perſon with CHRIST; the Florinians, who had FLORINUS and BLASTUS for their chiefs [z], and ſeveral others. It is highly probable, that the ancient doctors, deceived by the variety of names that diſtinguiſhed the heretics, may with too much precipitation have divided one ſect into many; nay, it may be further queſtioned, whether they have, at all times, repreſented accurately the nature and true meaning of ſeveral opinions concerning which they have written. The leſs conſiderable.

XIX. The Ophites, or Serpentinians, a ridiculous ſort of heretics, who had for their leader a man called EUPHRATES, deſerve not the loweſt place among the Egyptian Gnoſtics. This ſect, which had its origin among the Jews, was of a Ophites.

*Patr. et Hæreticor.* § 2. p. 69. 82. There is an ample account of the *Marcoſians* in IRENÆUS, *Contr. Hær.* lib. i. cap. xiv. p. 70.

☞ [z] Here Dr. MOSHEIM has fallen into a ſlight inaccuracy, in confounding the opinions of theſe two heretics; ſince it is certain, that BLASTUS was for reſtoring the Jewiſh religion, and celebrated the paſſover on the fourteenth day; whereas FLORINUS was a Valentinian, and maintained the doctrine of the *two principles*, with other Gnoſtic errors.

more

CENT. II. PART II.

more ancient date than the Chriſtian religion. A part of its followers embraced the goſpel, while the other retained their primitive ſuperſtition, and from hence aroſe the diviſion of the Ophites into Chriſtian and Anti-chriſtian. The Chriſtian Ophites entertained almoſt the ſame fantaſtic opinions that were held by the other Egyptian Gnoſtics, concerning the *æons*, the *eternal matter*, the *creation of the world* in oppoſition to the will of God, the *rulers of the ſeven planets* that preſided over this world, the *tyranny of demiurge*, and alſo concerning CHRIST united to the man JESUS, in order to deſtroy the empire of this uſurper. But beſides theſe, they maintained the following particular tenet, from whence alſo they received the name of Ophites, *viz.* "That the *ſerpent*, by which our firſt parents were "deceived, was either CHRIST himſelf, or *Sophia*, "concealed under the form of that animal;" and in conſequence of this opinion, they are ſaid to have nouriſhed a certain number of ſerpents, which they looked upon as ſacred, and to which they offered a ſort of worſhip, a ſubordinate kind of divine honours. It was no difficult matter for thoſe, who made a diſtinction between the Supreme Being and the creator of the world, and who looked upon every thing as divine, which was in oppoſition to *demiurge*, to fall into theſe extravagant notions.

Monarchians and Patropaſſians.

XX. The ſchiſms and commotions that aroſe in the church, from a mixture of the oriental and Egyptian philoſophy with the Chriſtian religion, were, in the ſecond century, increaſed by thoſe Grecian philoſophers who embraced the doctrine of CHRIST. The Chriſtian doctrine, concerning the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, and the *two natures* united in our bleſſed Saviour, were, by no means, reconcileable with the tenets of the ſages and doctors of *Greece*, who therefore endeavoured to explain them in ſuch a manner as to render them

them comprehenſible. PRAXEAS, a man of genius and learning, began to propagate theſe explications at *Rome*, and was ſeverely perſecuted for the errors they contained. He denied any *real* diſtinction between the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, and maintained that the *Father*, ſole creator of all things, had united to himſelf the *human nature* of CHRIST. Hence his followers were called Monarchians, becauſe of their denying a plurality of perſons in the Deity; and alſo Patropaſſians, becauſe, according to TERTULLIAN's account, they believed that the FATHER was ſo intimately united with the man CHRIST, his ſon, that he ſuffered with him the anguiſh of an afflicted life, and the torments of an ignominious death. However ready many may have been to embrace this erroneous doctrine, it does not appear, that this ſect formed to themſelves a ſeparate place of worſhip, or removed themſelves from the ordinary aſſemblies of Chriſtians [*a*].

Theodotus; Artemon.

XXI. An opinion highly reſembling that now mentioned was, about the ſame time, profeſſed at *Rome* by THEODOTUS, who, though a tanner, was a man of profound learning, and alſo by ARTEMAS, or ARTEMON, from whom the ſect of the Artemonites derived their origin. The accounts given of theſe two perſons, by the ancient writers, are not only few in number, but are alſo extremely ambiguous and obſcure. Their ſentiments, however, as far as they can be collected from the beſt records, amount to this; "That, at the birth of "the man CHRIST, a certain *divine energy*, or "portion of the divine nature (and not the *perſon* "of the father, as PRAXEAS imagined), united it-"ſelf to him."

It is impoſſible to decide with any degree of certainty which of the two was the moſt ancient,

[*a*] TERTULLIANI *Lib. contrà Praxeam*; as alſo PETRI WESSELINGII *Probabilia*, cap. xxvi. p. 223.

THEO-

CENT. II. PART II.

THEODOTUS, or ARTEMON; as alſo whether they both taught the ſame doctrine, or differed in their opinions. One thing, indeed, is certain, and that is, that the diſciples of both applied the dictates of philoſophy, and even the ſcience of geometry, to the explication of the Chriſtian doctrine.

Hermogenes.

XXII. A like attachment to the dictates of a preſumptuous philoſophy, induced HERMOGENES, a painter by profeſſion, to abandon the doctrine of Chriſtianity concerning the origin of the world and the nature of the ſoul, and thus to raiſe new troubles in the church. Regarding *matter* as the fountain of all evil, he could not perſuade himſelf that God had created it from nothing, by an almighty act of his will; and therefore he maintained, that the world, with whatever it contains, as alſo the ſouls of men, and other ſpirits, were formed by the Deity from an uncreated and eternal maſs of corrupt *matter*. In this doctrine there were many intricate things, and it manifeſtly jarred with the opinions commonly received among Chriſtians relative to that difficult and almoſt unſearchable ſubject. How HERMOGENES explained thoſe doctrines of Chriſtianity, which oppoſed his ſyſtem, neither TERTULLIAN, who refuted it, nor any of the ancient writers, inform us [*b*].

The illiterate ſects.

XXIII. Theſe ſects, which we have now been paſſing in review, may be juſtly regarded as the offspring of philoſophy. But they were ſucceeded by one in which ignorance reigned, and which was the mortal enemy of philoſophy and letters.

Montanus.

It was formed by MONTANUS, an obſcure man, without any capacity or ſtrength of judgment,

[*b*] There is yet extant a book written by TERTULLIAN againſt HERMOGENES, in which the opinions of the latter, concerning *matter, and the origin of the world*, are warmly oppoſed. We have loſt another work of the ſame author, in which he refuted the notion of HERMOGENES concerning *the Soul*.

and who lived in a Phrygian village called *Pepuza*. This weak man was fooliſh and extravagant enough to take it into his head, that he was the *paraclete*, or comforter [*c*], which the divine Saviour, at his departure from the earth, promiſed to ſend to his diſciples to lead them to all truth. He made no attempts upon the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity, but only declared, that he was ſent, with a divine commiſſion, to give to the moral precepts delivered by CHRIST and his

[*c*] Thoſe are undoubtedly miſtaken, who have aſſerted that MONTANUS gave himſelf out for the *Holy Ghoſt*. However weak he may have been in point of capacity, he was not fool enough to puſh his pretenſions ſo far. Neither have they, who inform us that MONTANUS pretended to have received from above the ſame *ſpirit*, or *paraclete*, which formerly animated the apoſtles, interpreted with accuracy the meaning of this heretic. It is, therefore, neceſſary to obſerve here, that MONTANUS made a diſtinction between the *paraclete*, promiſed by CHRIST to his apoſtles, and the *Holy Spirit*, that was ſhed upon them on the day of pentecoſt; and underſtood, by the former, a divine teacher pointed out by CHRIST under the name of *paraclete*, or comforter, who was to perfect the goſpel by the addition of ſome doctrines omitted by our Saviour, and to caſt a full light upon others which were expreſſed in an obſcure and imperfect manner, though for wiſe reaſons which ſubſiſted during the miniſtry of CHRIST; and, indeed, MONTANUS was not the only perſon that made this diſtinction. Other Chriſtian doctors were of opinion, that the *paraclete*, promiſed by JESUS to his diſciples, was a divine ambaſſador, entirely diſtinct from the Holy Ghoſt, which was ſhed upon the apoſtles. In the third century, MANES interpreted the promiſe of CHRIST in this manner. He pretended moreover, that he himſelf was the *paraclete*; and that, in his perſon, the prediction was fulfilled. Every one knows, that MAHOMET entertained the ſame notion, and applied to himſelf the prediction of CHRIST, concerning the coming of the *paraclete*. It was, therefore, this divine meſſenger that MONTANUS pretended to be, and not the Holy Ghoſt. This will appear, with the utmoſt evidence, to thoſe who read with attention the account given of this matter by TERTULLIAN, who was the moſt famous of all the diſciples of MONTANUS, and the moſt perfectly acquainted with every point of his doctrine.

apoſtles

CENT. II. PART II.

apoſtles the finiſhing *touch* that was to bring them to perfection. He was of opinion, that CHRIST and his apoſtles made, in their precepts, many allowances to the infirmities of thoſe among whom they lived, and that this condeſcending indulgence rendered their ſyſtem of moral laws imperfect and incomplete. He therefore added to the laws of the goſpel many auſtere deciſions; inculcated the neceſſity of multiplying faſts; prohibited ſecond marriages as unlawful; maintained that the church ſhould refuſe abſolution to thoſe who had fallen into the commiſſion of enormous ſins; and condemned all care of the body, eſpecially all nicety in dreſs, and all female ornaments. The exceſſive auſterity of this ignorant fanatic did not ſtop here; he ſhewed the ſame averſion to the nobleſt employments of the mind, that he did to the innocent enjoyments of life; and gave it as his opinion, that philoſophy, arts, and whatever favoured of polite literature, ſhould be mercileſsly baniſhed from the Chriſtian church. He looked upon thoſe Chriſtians as guilty of a moſt heinous tranſgreſſion, who ſaved their lives, by flight, from the perſecuting ſword, or who ranſomed them, by money, from the hands of their cruel and mercenary judges. I might mention many other precepts of the ſame teacher, equal to theſe in ſeverity and rigour.

The ſucceſs of Montanus and his doctrine.

XXIV. It was impoſſible to ſuffer, within the bounds of the church, an enthuſiaſt, who gave himſelf out for a teacher; whoſe precepts were ſuperior in ſanctity to thoſe of CHRIST himſelf, and who impoſed his auſtere diſcipline upon Chriſtians, as enjoined, by a divine authority, and dictated by the oracle of celeſtial wiſdom, which ſpoke to the world through him. Beſides, his diſmal predictions concerning the diſaſters that were to happen in the empire, and the approaching

proaching deſtruction of the Roman republic, were every way proper to render him obnoxious to the governing powers, and alſo to excite their reſentment againſt the church, which nouriſhed ſuch an inauſpicious prophet in its boſom. MONTANUS, therefore, firſt by a decree of certain aſſemblies, and afterwards by the unanimous voice of the whole church, was ſolemnly ſeparated from the body of the faithful. It is, however, certain, that the very ſeverity of his doctrines gained him the eſteem and confidence of many, who were far from being of the loweſt order. The moſt eminent among theſe were, PRISCILLA and MAXIMILLA, ladies more remarkable for their opulence than for their virtue, and who fell with a high degree of warmth and zeal into the viſions of their fanatical chief, propheſied like him, and imitated the pretended *paraclete* in all the variety of his extravagance and folly. Hence it became an eaſy matter for MONTANUS to erect a new church, which was alſo, in effect, firſt eſtabliſhed at *Pepuza*, a town in *Phrygia*, and afterwards ſpread abroad through *Aſia*, *Africa*, and a part of *Europe*. The moſt eminent and learned of all the followers of this rigid enthuſiaſt was TERTULLIAN, a man of great learning and genius, but of an auſtere and melancholy natural temper. This great man, by adopting the ſentiments of MONTANUS, and maintaining his cauſe with fortitude, and even vehemence, in a multitude of books written upon that occaſion, has ſhown to the world a mortifying ſpectacle of the deviations of which human nature is capable, even in thoſe in whom it ſeems to have approached the neareſt to perfection [*d*].

[*d*] For an account of the Montaniſts, ſee EUSEB. *Eccl. Hiſtory*, book v. ch. xvi. and in general all the writers ancient and

CENT. II. PART II.

and modern (especially TERTULLIAN) who have professedly written concerning the sects of the early ages. The learned Mr. THEOPHILUS WERNSDORF published at *Dantzick*, in the year 1751, a most ingenious exposition of whatever regards the sect of the Montanists, under the following title; *Commentatio de Montanistis Sæculi secundi, vulgo creditis Hæreticis.*

THE

# THE THIRD CENTURY.

## PART I.

## The External HISTORY of the CHURCH.

### CHAPTER I.

*Which contains the proſperous events that happened to the church during this century.*



I. THAT the Chriſtians ſuffered, in this century, calamities and injuries of the moſt dreadful kind, is a matter that admits of no debate; nor was there, indeed, any period in which they were not expoſed to perpetual dangers. For not to mention the fury of the people, ſet in motion, ſo often, by the craft and zeal of their licentious prieſts, the evil came from a higher ſource; the prætors and magiſtrates, notwithſtanding the ancient laws of the emperors in favour of the Chriſtians, had it in their power to purſue them with all ſorts of vexations, as often as avarice, cruelty, or ſuperſtition rouſed up the infernal ſpirit of perſecution in their breaſts. At the ſame time, it is certain, that the rights and privileges of the Chriſtians were multiplied, in this century, much more than many are apt to imagine. In the army, at court, and, indeed, in all the orders of the nation, there was a conſiderable number of Chriſtians, who

The rights and immunities of the Chriſtians increaſed

CENT. III. PART I.

lived entirely unmoleſted; and, what is ſtill more, the profeſſion of Chriſtianity was no obſtacle to public preferment under moſt of the emperors that reigned in this century. It is alſo certain, that the Chriſtians had, in many places, houſes where they aſſembled for the purpoſes of divine worſhip, and that with the knowledge and connivance of the emperors and magiſtrates. And though it be more than probable, that this liberty was, upon many occaſions, and even for the moſt part, purchaſed at a high rate; yet it is manifeſt, that ſome of the emperors were very favourably inclined towards the Chriſtians, and were far from having an averſion to their religion.

under various emperors.

II. CARACALLA, the ſon of SEVERUS, was proclaimed emperor in the year 211, and, during the ſix years of his government, he neither oppreſſed the Chriſtians himſelf, nor permitted any others to treat them with cruelty or injuſtice. HELIOGABALUS alſo, though in other reſpects the moſt infamous of all princes [*a*], and, perhaps, the moſt odious of all mortals, ſhewed no marks of bitterneſs or averſion to the diſciples of JESUS.

The benignity of Alexander towards the Chriſtians.

His ſucceſſor, ALEXANDER SEVERUS, who was a prince diſtinguiſhed by a noble aſſemblage of the moſt excellent and illuſtrious virtues, did not, indeed, abrogate the laws that had been enacted againſt the Chriſtians; and this is the reaſon why we have ſome examples of martyrdom under his adminiſtration. It is nevertheleſs certain, that he ſhewed them, in many ways, and upon every occaſion that was offered him, the moſt undoubted marks of benignity and favour; nay, he is ſaid to have gone ſo far as to pay a certain ſort of worſhip to the divine author of our religion [*b*]. This his favourable inclination towards

[*a*] LAMPRIDIUS *Vita Elagabali*, c. iii. p. 796.

[*b*] LAMPRID. *De Vita Severi*, cap. xxix. p. 930. Vide CAROL.

wards the Chriſtians was probably owing, at firſt, to the inſtructions and counſels of his mother JULIA MAMMÆA, for whom he had a high degree of love and veneration. JULIA had very favourable ſentiments of the Chriſtian religion; and, being once at *Antioch*, ſent for the famous ORIGEN from *Alexandria*, in order to enjoy the pleaſure and advantage of his converſation and inſtructions. Thoſe who aſſert that JULIA, and her ſon ALEXANDER, embraced the Chriſtian religion, are, by no means, furniſhed with unexceptionable teſtimonies to confirm this fact; though we may affirm, with confidence, that this virtuous prince looked upon Chriſtianity as meriting, beyond all other religions, toleration and favour from the ſtate, and conſidered its author as worthy of a place among thoſe who have been diſtinguiſhed by their ſublime virtues, and honoured with a commiſſion from above [*r*].

III. Under GORDIAN the Chriſtians lived in tranquillity. His ſucceſſors the PHILIPS, father and ſon, proved ſo favourable and even friendly to them, that theſe two emperors paſſed, in the opinion of many, for Chriſtians; and, indeed, the arguments alleged to prove that they embraced, though in a ſecret and clandeſtine manner, the religion of JESUS, ſeem to have a high degree of weight, and render this fact extremely probable. But as theſe arguments are oppoſed by others equally ſpecious, that famous queſtion, relating to the religion of PHILIP the Arabian,

Other emperors favourable to the Chriſtians.

Queſtion concerning the religion of the emperor Philip.

CAROL. HENR. ZEIBICHII, *Diſſ. de Chriſto ab Alexandro in lavario cultu*, quæ extat in *Miſcellan. Lipſ. nov.* tom. iii. p. 42.

[*r*] Vide FRID. SPANHEMII, *Diſſ. de Lucii, Britonum Regis, Juliæ Mammææ, et Philipporum converſionibus*, tom. ii. opp. p. 400. Item, PAUL. JABLONSKI, *Diſſ. de Alexandro Severo ſacris Chriſtianis per Gnoſticos initiato*, in *Miſcellan. Lipſ. novis*, tom. iv. p. 56.

CENT. III. PART I.

and his ſon, muſt be left undecided [*d*]. Neither ſide offers reaſons ſo victorious and unanſwerable, as to produce a full and complete conviction; and this is therefore one of thoſe many caſes, where a ſuſpenſion of judgment is both allowable and wiſe. With reſpect to GALLIENUS, and ſome other emperors of this century, if they did not profeſſedly favour the progreſs of Chriſtianity, yet neither did they oppreſs its followers, nor retard its advancement.

The number of Chriſtians increaſed.

IV. This clemency and benevolence, which the followers of JESUS experienced from great men, and, eſpecially, from thoſe of imperial dignity, muſt be placed, without doubt, among thoſe human means that contributed to multiply the number of Chriſtians, and to enlarge the bounds of the church. Other cauſes, however, both *divine* and *human*, muſt be added here, to render a complete and ſatisfactory account of this matter. Among the cauſes which belong to the firſt of theſe claſſes, we do not only reckon the intrinſic force of celeſtial truth, and the piety and fortitude of thoſe who declared it to the world, but alſo that *eſpecial* and *interpoſing providence*, which, by dreams and viſions, preſented to the minds of many, who were either inatten-

The cauſes thereof partly divine.

☞ [*d*] The authors of the Univerſal Hiſtory have determined the queſtion which Dr. MOSHEIM leaves here undecided; and they think it may be affirmed, that PHILIP and his ſon embraced the goſpel, ſince that opinion is built upon ſuch reſpectable authority as that of JEROM, CHRYSOSTOM, DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, ZONARAS, NICEPHORUS, CEDRENUS, RUFFINUS, SYNCELLUS, OROSIUS, JORNANDES, AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, the learned cardinal BONA, VINCENTIUS LIRINENSIS, HUETIUS, and others. Dr. MOSHEIM refers his readers, for an account of this matter, to the following writers: SPANHEIM. *De Chriſtianiſmo Philipp.* tom. ii. opp. p. 400. ENTRETIENS *Hiſtoriques ſur le Chriſtianiſme de l'Empereur Philippe, par P. De L. F.* MAMMACHII *Origines et Antiqu. Chriſtianæ*, tom. ii. p. 252. Conſer. FABRIC. *De luce Evang.* &c. p. 252.

tive to the Chriſtian doctrine, or its profeſſed enemies, touched their hearts with a conviction of the truth, and a ſenſe of its importance, and engaged them, without delay, to profeſs themſelves the diſciples of CHRIST [*e*]. To this may alſo be added, the healing of diſeaſes, and other miracles, which many Chriſtians were yet enabled to perform by invoking the name of the divine Saviour [*f*]. The number of miracles was, however, much leſs in this than the preceding century; nor muſt this alteration be attributed only to the divine wiſdom, which rendered miraculous interpoſitions leſs frequent in proportion as they became leſs neceſſary, but alſo to his juſtice, which was provoked to diminiſh the frequency of gifts, which ſome did not ſcruple to pervert to mercenary purpoſes [*g*].

Partly human.

V. If we turn our view to the human means that contributed, at this time, to multiply the numbers of Chriſtians, and to extend the limits of the church, we ſhall find a great variety of cauſes uniting their influence, and contributing jointly to this happy purpoſe. Among theſe muſt be reckoned the tranſlations of the ſacred writings into various languages, the zeal and labours of ORIGEN in ſpreading abroad copies of them every where, and the different works that were publiſhed, by learned and pious men, in defence of the goſpel. We may add alſo to this, that the acts of beneficence and liberality, performed by the Chriſtians, even towards thoſe

[*e*] See, for an account of this matter, the following authors: ORIGEN, lib. i. *adv. Celſum*, p. 35. *Homil. in Lucæ* vii. p. 216. tom. ii. opp. edit. Baſil; as alſo TERTULLIAN. *De anima*, cap. xiv. p. 348. edit. Rigaltii, and EUSEBIUS, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. v. p. 208.

[*f*] ORIGEN, *contr. Celſum*, lib. i. p. 5. 7. EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. vii. CYPRIANUS, *Ep.* i. *ad Donat.* p. 3. and the notes of BALUSIUS upon that paſſage, p. 376.

[*g*] SPENCER, not. in *Origen. contra Celſum*, p. 6, 7.

CENT. III. PART I.

whoſe religious principles they abhorred, had a great influence in attracting the eſteem and removing the prejudices of many, who were thus prepared for examining, with candor, the Chriſtian doctrine, and, conſequently, for receiving its divine light. The worſhippers of the Pagan deities muſt have been deſtitute of every generous affection, of every humane feeling, if the view of that boundleſs charity, which the Chriſtians exerciſed towards the poor, the love they expreſſed even to their enemies, the tender care they took of the ſick and infirm, the humanity they diſcovered in the redemption of captives, and the other illuſtrious virtues, which rendered them ſo worthy of univerſal eſteem, had not touched their hearts, diſpelled their prepoſſeſſions, and rendered them more favourable to the diſciples of JESUS. If, among the cauſes of the propagation of Chriſtianity, there is any place due to *pious fraud*, it is certain, that they merit a very ſmall part of the honour of having contributed to this glorious purpoſe; ſince they were practiſed by few, and that very ſeldom.

Several countries receive the light of the goſpel.

VI. That the limits of the church were extended in this century, is a matter beyond all controverſy. It is not, however, equally certain in what manner, by what perſons, or in what parts of the world, this was effected. ORIGEN, invited from *Alexandria* by an Arabian prince, converted, by his aſſiduous labours, a certain tribe of wandering Arabs to the Chriſtian faith [*b*]. The Goths, a fierce and warlike people, who inhabited the countries of *Myſia* and *Thrace*, and who, accuſtomed to rapine, vexed the neighbouring provinces by perpetual incurſions, received the knowledge of the goſpel by the means of certain Chriſtian doctors ſent thither

[*b*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xix. p. 221.

from

from *Aſia*. The holy lives of theſe venerable teachers, and the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, attracted the eſteem even of a people educated to nothing but plunder and devaſtation, and abſolutely uncivilized by letters or ſcience; and their authority and influence grew ſo great, and produced, in proceſs of time, ſuch remarkable effects, that a great part of this barbarous people became the diſciples of CHRIST, and put off, in a manner, that ferocity that was become ſo natural to them [*i*].

Among others Gaul and Germany.

VII. The Chriſtian aſſemblies, founded in Gaul by the Aſiatic doctors in the preceding century, were few in number, and of very little extent; but both their number and their extent were conſiderably encreaſed from the time of the emperor DECIUS. Under his reign DIONYSIUS, GATIAN, TROPHYMUS, PAUL, SATURNINUS, MARTIAL, STREMONIUS, men of exemplary piety, paſſed into this province, and, amidſt dangers and trials of various kinds, erected churches at *Paris*, *Tours*, *Arles*, and ſeveral other places. This was followed by a rapid progreſs of the goſpel among the Gauls, as the diſciples of theſe pious teachers ſpread, in a ſhort time, the knowledge of Chriſtanity through the whole country [*k*]. We muſt alſo place in this century the origin of ſeveral German churches, ſuch as thoſe of *Cologn*, *Treves*, *Metz*, and others, of which EUCHARIUS, VALERIUS, MATERNUS, and CLEMENS were the principal founders [*l*]. The hiſtorians

[*i*] SOZOMENUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. ii. cap. vi. PAULUS DIACONUS, *Hiſt. Miſcell.* lib. ii. cap. xiv. PHILOSTORGIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. ii. cap. v. p. 470.

[*k*] See the hiſtory of the *Francks* by GREGORY DE TOURS, book i. ch. xxviii. p. 23. THEODOR. RUINART, *Acta Martyr. ſincera*, p. 109.

[*l*] See AUG. CALMET, *Hiſt. de Lorraine*, tom. i. diſſert. i. p. 7. Jo. NICOL. ab HONTHEIM, *Hiſtoriæ Trevirenſis*, tom. i. ubi *Diſſ. de æra fundati Epiſcopatus Trevirenſis.*

CENT. III. PART I.

of *Scotland* inform us, that the light of Chriſtianity aroſe upon that country during this century; but, though there be nothing improbable in this aſſertion, yet it is not built upon inconteſtable authority [*m*].

## CHAP. II.

### *Concerning the calamitous events which happened to the church in this century.*

The perſecution under Severus.

I. IN the beginning of this century, the Chriſtian church ſuffered calamities of various kinds throughout the provinces of the Roman empire. Theſe ſufferings increaſed in a terrible manner, in conſequence of a law made, in the year 203, by the emperor SEVERUS (who, in other reſpects, was certainly no enemy to the Chriſtians), by which every ſubject of the empire was prohibited to change the religion of his anceſtors for that of the Chriſtian or Jewiſh [*n*]. This law was, in its effects, moſt prejudicial to the Chriſtians; for, though it did not formally condemn them, and ſeemed only adapted to put a ſtop to the further progreſs of the goſpel, yet it induced rapacious and unjuſt magiſtrates to perſecute even unto death the poorer ſort among the Chriſtians, that thus the richer might be led, through fear of like treatment, to purchaſe their tranquillity and ſafety at an expenſive rate. Hence many of the diſciples of CHRIST, both in *Egypt*, and alſo in ſeveral parts of *Aſia* and *Africa*,

[*m*] See USHER et STILLINGFLEET, *Antiquit. et Origin. Eccleſiar. Brit.* See alſo GEORGE MACKENZIE, *De Regali Scotorum proſapia*, cap. viii. p. 119.

[*n*] EUSEBIUS, *Eccleſ. Hiſtor.* lib. vi. cap. i. SPARTIANUS *in Severo*, cap. xvi, xvii. p. 617.

were

were put to death in conſequence of this law. Among theſe LEONIDAS the father of ORIGEN, PERPETUA and FELICITAS (thoſe two famous African ladies, whoſe *acts* [o] are come down to our times), POTAMIENA MARCELLA, and other martyrs of both ſexes, acquired an illuſtrious name by the magnanimity and tranquillity with which they endured the moſt cruel ſufferings.

That under Maximin.

II. From the death of SEVERUS to the reign of MAXIMIN, the condition of the Chriſtians was, in ſome places, proſperous, and, in all, ſupportable. But with MAXIMIN the face of affairs changed. This unworthy emperor, having animated the Roman ſoldiers to aſſaſſinate ALEXANDER SEVERUS, dreaded the reſentment of the Chriſtians, whom that excellent prince had favoured and protected in a diſtinguiſhed manner; and, for this reaſon, he ordered the biſhops, whom he knew that ALEXANDER had always treated as his intimate friends, to be ſeized and put to death [p]. During his reign, the Chriſtians ſuffered in the moſt barbarous manner; for, though the edict of this tyrant extended only to the biſhops and leaders of the Chriſtian church, yet its ſhocking effects reached much further; as it animated the heathen prieſts, the magiſtrates, and the multitude, againſt Chriſtians of every rank and order [q].

Many Chriſtians, in conſequence of the cruelty of Decius, become chargeable with defection.

III. This ſtorm was ſucceeded by a calm, in which the Chriſtians enjoyed an happy tranquillity for many years. The acceſſion of DECIUS TRAJAN to the imperial throne, in the year 249, raiſed a new tempeſt, in which the fury of perſecution fell in a dreadful manner upon the

[o] THEOD. RUINART, *Acta Martyr.* p. 90.

[p] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xxviii. p. 225. OROSIUS. *Hiſt.* lib. vii. cap. xix. p. 509.

[q] ORIGEN. tom. xxviii. in Matth. opp. tom. i. p. 137. See alſo FIRMILIANUS in CYPRIANI *Epiſtolis*, p. 140.

church

CENT. III. PART I.

church of CHRIST. For this emperor, either from an ill-grounded fear of the Chriſtians, or from a violent zeal for the ſuperſtition of his anceſtors, publiſhed moſt terrible and cruel edicts; by which the prætors were ordered, upon pain of death, either to extirpate the whole body of Chriſtians without exception, or to force them, by torments of various kinds, to return to the Pagan worſhip. Hence, in all the provinces of the empire, multitudes of Chriſtians were, during the ſpace of two years, put to death by the moſt horrid puniſhments [*r*], which an ingenious barbarity could invent. The moſt unhappy circumſtance of all theſe cruelties was, their fatal influence upon the faith and conſtancy of many of the ſufferers; for as this perſecution was much more terrible than all thoſe that preceded it, ſo a great number of Chriſtians, diſmayed, not at the approach of death, but at the aſpect of thoſe dreadful and lingering torments, which a barbarous magiſtracy had prepared to combat their conſtancy, fell from the profeſſion of their faith, and ſecured themſelves from puniſhment, either by *offering ſacrifices*, or by *burning incenſe*, before the images of the gods, or by purchaſing *certificates* from the Pagan prieſts. Hence aroſe the opprobrious names of SACRIFICATI, given to thoſe who *ſacrificed*; THURIFICATI, to thoſe who *burned incenſe*; and LIBELLATICI, to thoſe who *produced certificates* [*s*].

IV.

[*r*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xxxix. p. 234. cap. xli. p. 238. GREGORIUS NYSS. *in vita Thaumaturgi*, tom. iii. opp. p. 568. CYPRIANUS, *De Lapſis*, p. 182.

☞ [*s*] Theſe *certificates* were not all equally criminal, nor ſuppoſed all a degree of apoſtacy equally enormous. It is therefore neceſſary to advertiſe the reader of the following diſtinctions omitted by Dr. MOSHEIM: Theſe certificates were ſometimes no more than a permiſſion to abſtain from ſacrificing, obtained by a fee given to the judges, and were not looked upon as an act of apoſtacy, unleſs the Chriſtians, who demanded

IV. This defection of ſuch a prodigious number of Chriſtians under DECIUS was the occaſion of great commotions in the church, and produced debates of a very difficult and delicate nature. For the *lapſed*, or thoſe that had fallen from their Chriſtian profeſſion, were deſirous to be reſtored to church-communion, without ſubmitting to that painful courſe of *penitential* diſcipline, which the eccleſiaſtical laws indiſpenſably required. The biſhops were divided upon this matter: ſome were for ſhewing the deſired indulgence, while others oppoſed it with all their might [*t*]. In *Egypt* and *Africa*, many, in order to obtain more ſpeedily the pardon of their apoſtacy, intereſted the *martyrs* in their behalf, and received from them *letters of reconciliation and peace* *, i. e. a formal act, by which they (the martyrs) declared, in their laſt moments, that they looked upon them as worthy of their communion, and deſired of conſequence that they ſhould be reſtored to their place among the brethren. Some biſhops and preſbyters re-admitted into the church with too much facility, apoſtates and tranſgreſſors, who produced ſuch teſtimonies as theſe. But CYPRIAN, biſhop of *Carthage*, a man of ſevere wiſdom and great dignity of character, acted in quite another way. Though he had no intention

Warm contests occaſioned by the defection of Chriſtians.

* Libelli Pacis.

demanded them, had declared to the judges, that they had conformed themſelves to the emperor's edicts. But, at other times, they contained a profeſſion of paganiſm, and were either offered voluntarily by the apoſtate, or were ſubſcribed by him, when they were preſented to him by the perſecuting magiſtrate. Many uſed certificates, as letters of ſecurity, obtained from the prieſts at a high rate, and which diſpenſed them from either profeſſing or denying their ſentiments. See SPANHEIM. *Hiſtoria Chriſtiana*, p. 732, 733. See alſo PRUD. MARANUS *in vita Cypriani*, operibus ejus præmiſſa, § 6. p. 54.

[*t*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xliv. CYPR. *Epiſtolæ*, in many places.

to

CENT. III. PART I.

to derogate from the authority of the venerable martyrs, yet he oppoſed with vigour this unreaſonable lenity, and ſet limits to the efficacy of theſe letters of reconciliation and peace. Hence aroſe a keen diſpute between him and the martyrs, confeſſors, preſbyters, and lapſed, ſeconded by the people; and yet, notwithſtanding this formidable multitude of adverſaries, the venerable biſhop came off victorious [*u*].

The perſecutions under Gallus and Voluſianus.

V. GALLUS, the ſucceſſor of DECIUS, and VOLUSIANUS, ſon of the former, re-animated the flame of perſecution, which was beginning to burn with leſs fury [*w*]. And, beſides the ſufferings which the Chriſtians had to undergo in conſequence of their cruel edicts, they were alſo involved in the public calamities that prevailed at this time, and ſuffered grievouſly from a terrible peſtilence, which ſpread deſolation through many provinces of the empire [*x*]. This peſtilence alſo was an occaſion which the Pagan prieſts uſed with dexterity to renew the rage of perſecution againſt them, by perſuading the people that it was on account of the lenity uſed toward the Chriſtians, that the gods ſent down their judgments upon the nations. In the year 254, VALERIAN being declared emperor, made the fury of perſecution ceaſe, and reſtored the church to a ſtate of tranquillity.

Under Valerian.

VI. The clemency and benevolence which VALERIAN ſhewed to the Chriſtians, continued until the fifth year of his reign. Then the ſcene

[*u*] The whole hiſtory of this controverſy may be gathered from the epiſtles of CYPRIAN. See alſo GABR. ALBASPINÆUS, *Obſervat. Eccleſ.* lib. i. obſerv. xx. p. 94. DALLÆUS, *De pœnis et ſatisfactionibus humanis*, lib. vii. cap. xvi. p. 706.

[*w*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. i. p. 250. CYPRIAN. *Epiſt.* lvii, lviii.

[*x*] Vid. CYPRIANI *Lib. ad Demetrianum.*

began

began to change, and the change indeed was ſudden. MACRIANUS, a ſuperſtitious and cruel bigot to paganiſm, had gained an entire aſcendant over VALERIAN, and was his chief counſellor in every thing that related to the adminiſtration of the government. By the perſuaſion of this imperious miniſter, the Chriſtians were prohibited to aſſemble themſelves together, and their biſhops and doctors were ſent into baniſhment. This edict was publiſhed in the year 257, and was followed, the year after, by one ſtill more ſevere: in conſequence of which a conſiderable number of Chriſtians, in all the different provinces of the empire, were put to death, and that by ſuch cruel methods of execution, as were much more terrible than death itſelf. Of thoſe that ſuffered in this perſecution, the moſt eminent were CYPRIAN, biſhop of *Carthage*; SIXTUS, biſhop of *Rome*; and LAURENTIUS, a Roman deacon, who was barbarouſly conſumed by a ſlow and lingering fire. An unexpected event ſuſpended, for a while, the ſufferings of the Chriſtians. VALERIAN was made priſoner in the war againſt the Perſians; and his ſon GALLIENUS, in the year 260, reſtored peace to the church [*y*].

The ſtate of the church under Gallienus, Claudius, and Aurelian.

VII. The condition of the Chriſtians was rather ſupportable than happy, under the reign of GALLIENUS, which laſted eight years; as alſo under the ſhort adminiſtration of his ſucceſſor CLAUDIUS. Nor did they ſuffer much during the firſt four years of the reign of AURELIAN, who was raiſed to the empire in the year 270. But the fifth year of this emperor's adminiſtration would have proved fatal to them, had not his

[*y*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. x, xi. p. 255. *Acta Cypriani*, as they are to be found in the *Acta Martyrum* RUINARTI, p. 216. CYPRIANI *Epiſt.* lxxvii. p. 158. edit. Baluz. lxxxii. p. 165.

violent

CENT. III. PART I.

violent death prevented the execution of his cruel purpoſes. For while, ſet on by the unjuſt ſuggeſtions of his own ſuperſtition, or by the barbarous counſels of a bigotted prieſthood, he was preparing a formidable attack upon the Chriſtians, he was obliged to march into Gaul, where he was murdered, in the year 275, before his edicts were publiſhed throughout the empire [z]. Few therefore ſuffered martyrdom under his reign; and, indeed, during the remainder of this century, the Chriſtians enjoyed a conſiderable meaſure of eaſe and tranquillity. They were, at leaſt, free from any violent attacks of oppreſſion and injuſtice, except in a ſmall number of caſes, where the avarice and ſuperſtition of the Roman magiſtrates interrupted their tranquillity [a].

The attempts of the philoſophers againſt Chriſtianity.

VIII. While the Roman emperors and proconſuls employed againſt the Chriſtians the terror of unrighteous edicts, and the edge of the deſtroying ſword, the Platonic philoſophers, who have been deſcribed above, exhauſted againſt Chriſtianity all the force of their learning and eloquence, and all the reſources of their art and dexterity, in rhetorical declamations, ſubtile writings, and ingenious ſtratagems. Theſe artful adverſaries were ſo much the more dangerous and formidable, as they had adopted ſeveral of the doctrines and inſtitutions of the goſpel, and with a ſpecious air of moderation and impartiality, were attempting, after the example of their maſter AMMONIUS, to reconcile paganiſm with Chriſtianity, and to form a ſort of coalition of

[z] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. xxx. LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus Perſequutor.* cap. vi.

[a] Among theſe vexations may be reckoned the cruelty of GALERIUS MAXIMIAN, who, towards the concluſion of this century, perſecuted the miniſters of his court, and the ſoldiers of his army, who had profeſſed Chriſtianity. See EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 292. iv. p. 295. 317.

the ancient and the new religion. These philoſophers had at their head, in this century, PORPHYRY, a *Syrian*, or, as ſome allege, a *Tyrian*, by birth, who wrote againſt the Chriſtians a long and laborious work, which was deſtroyed afterwards by an imperial edict [*b*]. He was, undoubtedly, a writer of great dexterity, genius, and erudition, as thoſe of his works that yet remain ſufficiently teſtify. But thoſe very works, and the hiſtory of his life, ſhew us, at the ſame time, that he was a much more virulent, than a formidable enemy to the Chriſtians. For by them it appears, that he was much more attentive to the ſuggeſtions of a ſuperſtitious ſpirit, and the viſions of a lively fancy, than to the ſober dictates of right reaſon and a ſound judgment. And it may be more eſpecially obſerved of the fragments that yet remain of his work againſt the Chriſtians, that they are equally deſtitute of judgment and equity, and are utterly unworthy of a wiſe and a good man [*c*].

CENT. III. PART I.

IX. Many were the deceitful and perfidious ſtratagems by which this ſect endeavoured to ob-

Compariſons drawn between the philoſophers and Chriſt.

[*b*] See HOLSTENIUS, *De vita Porphyr.* cap. xi. FABRIC. *Lux Evang.* p. 154. BUDDEUS, *Iſagoge in Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1009.

☞ [*c*] This work of PORPHYRY againſt the Chriſtians was burnt by an edict of CONSTANTINE the GREAT. It was divided into fifteen books, as we find in EUSEBIUS, and contained the blackeſt calumnies againſt the Chriſtians. The *firſt* book treated of the contradictions which he pretended to have found in the ſacred writings.—The greateſt part of the *twelfth* is employed in fixing the time when the prophecies of DANIEL were written. For PORPHYRY himſelf found theſe prophecies ſo clearly and evidently fulfilled, that, to avoid the force of the argument, deducible from thence, in favour of Chriſtianity, he was forced to have recourſe to this abſurd ſuppoſition, that *theſe prophecies had been publiſhed under the name of* DANIEL, by one who lived in the time of ANTIOCHUS, and wrote after the arrival of the events foretold. METHODIUS, EUSEBIUS, and APOLLINARIS, wrote againſt PORPHYRY. But theſe refutations have been long ſince loſt.

ſcure

CENT. III. PART I.

ſcure the luſtre, and to diminiſh the authority, of the Chriſtian doctrine. But none of theſe were more dangerous than the ſeducing artifice with which they formed a compariſon between the life, actions, and miracles of CHRIST, and the hiſtory of the ancient philoſophers; and placed the contending parties in ſuch fallacious points of view, as to make the pretended ſages of antiquity appear in nothing inferior to the divine Saviour. With this view, ARCHYTAS of *Tarentum*, PYTHAGORAS, of whom PORPHYRY wrote the life, APOLLONIUS TYANÆUS, a Pythagorean philoſopher, whoſe miracles and peregrinations were highly celebrated by the vulgar, were brought upon the ſcene, and exhibited as divine teachers and rivals of the glory of the Son of God. PHILOSTRATUS, one of the moſt eminent rhetoricians of this age, compoſed a pompous hiſtory of the life of APOLLONIUS, who was little elſe than a cunning knave, and did nothing but ape the auſterity and ſanctity of PYTHAGORAS. This hiſtory appears manifeſtly deſigned to draw a parallel between CHRIST and the philoſopher of *Tyana*; but the impudent fictions, and the ridiculous fables, with which this work is filled, muſt, one would think, have rendered it incapable of deceiving any who were poſſeſſed of a ſound mind; any, but ſuch as, through the corruption of vicious prejudices, were willing to be deceived [*d*].

The pernicious conſequences of this compariſon.

X. But as there are no opinions however abſurd, and no ſtories however idle and improbable, that a weak and ignorant multitude, who are more attentive to the pomp of *words* than to the truth of *things*, will not eaſily ſwallow; ſo it happened, that many were enſnared by the abſurd attempts

[*d*] See OLEARIUS's preface to the life of APOLLONIUS, by PHILOSTRATUS; as alſo MOSHEIM's notes to his Latin tranſlation of CUDWORTH's *Intellectual Syſtem*, p. 304. 309. 311. 834.

of

of theſe inſidious philoſophers. Some were induced by theſe perfidious ſtratagems to abandon the Chriſtian religion, which they had embraced. Others, when they heard that true Chriſtianity (as it was taught by JESUS, and not as it was afterwards corrupted by his diſciples) differed almoſt in nothing from the Pagan religion properly explained and reſtored to its primitive purity, determined to remain in the religion of their anceſtors, and in the worſhip of their gods. A third ſort were led, by theſe compariſons between CHRIST and the ancient philoſophers, to form to themſelves a motley ſyſtem of religion compoſed of the tenets of both parties, whom they treated with the ſame veneration and reſpect. Such was, particularly, the method of ALEXANDER SEVERUS, who paid indiſcriminately divine honours to CHRIST, and to ORPHEUS, to APOLLONIUS, and the other philoſophers and heroes whoſe names were famous in ancient times.

The attempts of the Jews againſt the Chriſtians.

XI. The credit and power of the Jews were now too much diminiſhed to render them as capable of injuring the Chriſtians, by their influence upon the magiſtrates, as they had formerly been. This did not, however, diſcourage their malicious efforts, as the books which TERTULLIAN and CYPRIAN have written againſt them abundantly ſhew, with ſeveral other writings of the Chriſtian doctors, who complained of the malignity of the Jews, and of their perfidious ſtratagems [*e*]. During the perſecution under SEVERUS, a certain perſon called DOMNINUS, who had embraced Chriſtianity, deſerted to the Jews, doubtleſs, to avoid the puniſhments that were decreed againſt the Chriſtians; and it was to recal this apoſtate to his duty and his profeſſion, that SERAPION, biſhop of *Antioch*,

[*e*] HYPPOLYTUS, *Serm. in Suſann. et Daniel.* tom. 1. opp. p. 274. 276.

CENT. III. PART I.

wrote a particular treatiſe againſt the Jews [*f*]. We may, however, conclude from this inſtance, that when the Chriſtians were perſecuted, the Jews were treated with leſs ſeverity and contempt, on account of their enmity againſt the diſciples of JESUS. And from the ſame fact we may alſo learn, that, though they were in a ſtate of great ſubjection and abaſement, yet they were not entirely deprived of all power of oppreſſing the Chriſtians.

[*f*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xii. p. 213.

# PART II.

## The INTERNAL HISTORY of the CHURCH.

## CHAPTER I.

*Concerning the ſtate of letters and philoſophy during this century.*



The decay of learning.

I. THE arts and ſciences, which, in the preceding century, were in a declining ſtate, ſeemed, in this, ready to expire, and had now loſt all their vigour, and all their luſtre. The celebrated rhetorician LONGINUS, and the eminent hiſtorian DION CASSIUS, with a few others, were the laſt among the Greeks, who ſtood in the breach againſt the prevailing ignorance and barbariſm of the times. Men of learning and genius were leſs numerous ſtill in the weſtern provinces of the empire, though there were, in ſeveral places, flouriſhing ſchools erected for the advancement of the ſciences, and the culture of taſte and genius. Different reaſons contributed to this decay of learning. Few of the emperors patronized the ſciences, or encouraged, by the proſpect of their favour and protection, that emulation, which is the ſoul of the republic of letters. Beſides, the civil wars that almoſt always diſtracted the empire, were extremely unfavourable to the purſuit of ſcience, and the perpetual incurſions of the barbarous nations interrupted that leiſure and tranquillity which are ſo eſſential to the progreſs of learning and knowledge, and extinguiſhed, among a people accuſtomed to nothing almoſt but the din of arms, all deſire of literary acquiſitions [g].

[g] See the *Literary Hiſtory of France*, by the Benedictine monks, vol. i. part II. p. 317.

CENT. III. PART II.

The ſtate of philoſophy, principally the Platonic.

II. If we turn our eyes towards the ſtate of philoſophy, the proſpect will appear ſomewhat leſs deſolate and comfortleſs. There were, as yet, in ſeveral of the Grecian ſects, men of conſiderable knowledge and reputation, of whom LONGINUS has mentioned the greateſt part [*b*]. But all theſe ſects were gradually eclipſed by the ſchool of AMMONIUS, whoſe origin and doctrines have been conſidered above. This victorious ſect, which was formed in *Egypt*, iſſued forth from thence with ſuch a rapid progreſs, that, in a ſhort time, it extended itſelf almoſt throughout the Roman empire, and drew into its *vortex* the greateſt part of thoſe who applied themſelves, through inclination, to the ſtudy of philoſophy. This amazing progreſs was due to PLOTINUS, the moſt eminent diſciple of AMMONIUS, a man of a moſt ſubtile invention, and endowed by nature with a genius capable of the moſt profound reſearches, and equal to the inveſtigation of the moſt abſtruſe and difficult ſubjects. This penetrating and ſublime philoſopher taught publicly firſt in *Perſia*, and afterwards at *Rome*, and in *Campania*; in all which places the youth flocked in crowds to receive his inſtruction. He comprehended the precepts of his philoſophy, in ſeveral books, the moſt of which are yet extant [*i*].

Plotinus.

His doctrine univerſally propagated.

III. The number of diſciples that were formed in the ſchool of PLOTINUS, is almoſt beyond credibility. The moſt famous of them was PORPHYRY [*k*], who ſpread abroad through *Sicily*, and many

[*b*] In his life of PLOTINUS, epitomized by PORPHYRY, ch. xx. p. 128. edit. Fabricii.

[*i*] See PORPHYRII *vita Plotini*, of which FABRICIUS has given an edition in his *Bibliotheca Græca*, tom. iv. p. 91. BAYLE's *Diction.* tom. iii. at the article PLOTINUS; as alſo BRUCKER's *Hiſtoria Critica Philoſophiæ*.

☞ [*k*] PORPHYRY was firſt the diſciple of LONGINUS, author of the juſtly celebrated *Treatiſe on the ſublime*. But having paſſed

many other countries, the doctrine of his maſter, reviſed with great accuracy, adorned with the graces of flowing and elegant ſtyle, and enriched with new inventions and curious improvements [*l*]. From the time of AMMONIUS, until the ſixth century, this was almoſt the only ſyſtem of philoſophy that was publicly taught at *Alexandria*. A certain philoſopher, whoſe name was PLUTARCH, having learned it there, brought it into *Greece*, and renewed, at *Athens*, the celebrated *academy*, from whence iſſued a ſet of illuſtrious philoſophers, whom we ſhall have occaſion to mention in the progreſs of this work [*m*].

Different ſects of this philoſophy.

IV. We have unfolded above the nature and doctrines of this philoſophy, as far as was compatible with the brevity of our preſent deſign. It is, however, proper to add here, that its votaries were not all of the ſame ſentiments, but thought very differently upon a variety of ſubjects. This difference of opinion was the natural conſequence of that fundamental law, which the whole ſect was obliged to keep conſtantly in view, *viz. That truth was to be purſued with the utmoſt liberty, and to be collected from all the different ſyſtems in which it lay diſperſed.* Hence it happened, that the Athenians rejected certain opinions that were entertained by the philoſophers of *Alexandria*. None, however, who were ambitious to be ranked among theſe new Platoniſts, called in queſtion the main doctrines, which formed the ground-work of their ſingular ſyſtem; thoſe, for example, which regarded the *exiſtence of one God*; *the fountain of all things*; the *eternity of the world*; *the dependance of*

paſſed from *Greece* to *Rome*, where he heard PLOTINUS, he was ſo charmed with the genius and penetration of this philoſopher, that he attached himſelf entirely to him. See PLOTIN. *vit.* p. 3. EUNAP. c. ii. p. 17.

[*l*] HOLSTENIUS *vit. Porphyrii*, republiſhed in the *Bibliotheca Græca* of FABRICIUS.

[*m*] MARINI *vita Procli*, cap. xi, xii. p. 25.

CENT. III. PART II.

*matter upon the Supreme Being*; the *nature of ſouls*; the *plurality of gods*; the *method of interpreting the popular ſuperſtitions*, &c.

The ſtate of learning among the Chriſtians.

V. The famous queſtion concerning the excellence and utility of human learning, was now debated with great warmth among the Chriſtians; and the contending parties, in this controverſy, ſeemed hitherto of equal force in point of numbers, or nearly ſo. Many recommended the ſtudy of philoſophy, and an acquaintance with the Greek and Roman literature; while others maintained, that theſe were pernicious to the intereſts of genuine Chriſtianity and the progreſs of true piety. The cauſe of letters and philoſophy triumphed, however, by degrees; and thoſe who wiſhed well to them, gained ground more and more, till at length the ſuperiority was manifeſtly decided in their favour. This victory was principally due to the influence and authority of ORIGEN, who having been early inſtructed in the new kind of Platoniſm already mentioned, blended it unhappily with the purer and more ſublime tenets of a celeſtial doctrine, and recommended it, in the warmeſt manner, to the youth who attended his public leſſons. The fame of this philoſopher increaſed daily among the Chriſtians; and, in proportion to his riſing credit, his method of propoſing and explaining the doctrines of Chriſtianity gained authority, till it became almoſt univerſal. Beſides, ſome of the diſciples of PLOTINUS having embraced Chriſtianity, on condition that they ſhould be allowed to retain ſuch of the opinions of their maſter as they thought of ſuperior excellence and merit [*n*], this muſt alſo have contributed, in ſome meaſure, to turn the balance in favour of the ſciences. Theſe Chriſtian philoſo-

[*n*] AUGUSTINUS, *Epiſtola* lvi. *ad Dioſcor.* p. 260. tom. ii. opp.

phers

phers preſerving ſtill a fervent zeal for the doctrines of their Heathen chief, would naturally embrace every opportunity of ſpreading them abroad, and inſtilling them into the minds of the ignorant and the unwary.

CENT. III. PART II.

## CHAP. II.

*Concerning the doctors and miniſters of the church, and its form of government, during this century.*

I. THE form of eccleſiaſtical government that had been adopted by Chriſtians in general, had now acquired greater degrees of ſtability and force, both in particular churches, and in the univerſal ſociety of Chriſtians collectively conſidered. It appears inconteſtable from the moſt authentic records, and the beſt hiſtories of this century, that, in the larger cities, there was, at the head of each church, a perſon to whom was given the title of *biſhop*, who ruled this ſacred community with a certain ſort of authority, in concert, however, with the body of *preſbyters*, and conſulting, in matters of moment, the opinion and the voices of the whole aſſembly [*o*]. It is alſo equally evident, that, in every province, *one* biſhop was inveſted with a certain ſuperiority over the reſt, in point of rank and authority. This was neceſſary to the maintenance of that *aſſociation* of churches that had been introduced in the preceding century; and contributed, moreover, to facilitate the holding of *general councils*, and to give a certain degree of order and conſiſtence to their pro-

Of the form of church-government.

[*o*] A ſatisfactory account of this matter may be ſeen in BLONDELLI *Apologia pro Sententia Hieronymi de Epiſcopis et Preſbyteris*, p. 136. as that author has collected all the teſtimonies of the ancients relative to that ſubject.

CENT. III. PART II.

ceedings. It muſt, at the ſame time, be carefully obſerved, that the rights and privileges of theſe *primitive biſhops* were not, every where, accurately fixed, nor determined in ſuch a manner as to prevent encroachments and diſputes; nor does it appear, that the chief authority, in the province, was always conferred upon that biſhop who preſided over the church eſtabliſhed in the metropolis. It is further to be noticed, as a matter beyond all diſpute, that the biſhops of *Rome*, *Antioch*, and *Alexandria*, conſidered as rulers of primitive and apoſtolic churches, had a kind of pre-eminence over all others, and were not only conſulted frequently in affairs of a difficult and momentous nature, but were alſo diſtinguiſhed by peculiar rights and privileges.

The power and dignity of the biſhop of *Rome* in this century; what?

II. With reſpect, particularly, to the biſhop of *Rome*; he is ſuppoſed by CYPRIAN to have had, at this time, a certain pre-eminence in the church [*p*]; nor does he ſtand alone in this opinion. But it is to be carefully obſerved, that even thoſe who, with CYPRIAN, attributed this pre-eminence to the Roman prelate, inſiſted, at the ſame time, with the utmoſt warmth, upon the *equality*, in point of *dignity* and *authority*, that ſubſiſted among all the members of the epiſcopal order. In conſequence of this opinion of an *equality* among all Chriſtian biſhops, they rejected, with contempt, the judgment of the *biſhop of Rome*, when they thought it ill founded or unjuſt, and followed their own ſenſe of things with a perfect independence. Of this CYPRIAN himſelf gave an eminent example, in his famous controverſy with STEPHEN biſhop of *Rome*, concerning the *baptiſm of heretics*, in which he treated the arrogance of that imperious prelate with a noble in-

[*p*] CYPRIAN, *Ep.* lxxiii. p. 131. *Ep.* lv. p. 86. Ib. *De Unitate Eccleſiæ*, p. 195. edit. Baluzii.

dignation,

dignation, and alſo with a perfect contempt. Whoever, therefore, compares all theſe things together, will eaſily perceive, that the *pre-eminence* of the biſhop of *Rome*, was a pre-eminence of *order* and *aſſociation* [*q*], and not of *power* and *authority*. Or, to explain the matter yet more clearly, the pre-eminence of the biſhop of *Rome*, in the univerſal church, was ſuch as that of CYPRIAN, biſhop of *Carthage*, was in the African churches. And every one knows, that the precedence of this latter prelate diminiſhed in nothing the equality that ſubſiſted among all the African biſhops, invalidated in no inſtance their rights and liberties; but gave only to CYPRIAN, as the preſident of their general aſſemblies, a power of calling councils, of preſiding in them, of admoniſhing his brethren in a mild and fraternal manner, and of executing, in ſhort, ſuch offices as the *order* and purpoſes of theſe eccleſiaſtical meetings neceſſarily required [*r*].

The government of the church degenerates into a monarchical form.

III. The face of things began now to change in the Chriſtian church. The ancient method of eccleſiaſtical government ſeemed, in general, ſtill to ſubſiſt, while, at the ſame time, by imperceptible ſteps, it varied from the primitive rule, and degenerated towards the form of a religious monarchy. For the biſhops aſpired to higher degrees of power and authority than they had formerly poſſeſſed; and not only violated the rights

☞ [*q*] So I have tranſlated *Principatus ordinis et conſociationis*, which could not be otherwiſe rendered without a long circumlocution. The *pre-eminence* here mentioned, ſignifies the right of *convening councils, of preſiding in them, of collecting voices*, and ſuch other things as were eſſential to the *order* of theſe aſſemblies.

[*r*] See STEPH. BALUSII *adnot. ad Cypriani Epiſtolas*, p. 387. 389. 400. Conſult particularly the LXXI. LXXIII. epiſtles of CYPRIAN, and the LV. addreſſed to CORNELIUS biſhop of *Rome*, in which letters the Carthaginian prelate pleads with warmth and vehemence for the equality of all Chriſtian biſhops.

of

CENT. III. PART II.

of the people, but alſo made gradual encroachments upon the privileges of the preſbyters. And that they might cover theſe uſurpations with an air of juſtice, and an appearance of reaſon, they publiſhed new doctrines concerning the nature of the church and of the epiſcopal dignity, which, however, were, in general, ſo obſcure, that they themſelves ſeem to have underſtood them as little as thoſe to whom they were delivered. One of the principal authors of this change, in the government of the church, was CYPRIAN, who pleaded for the power of the biſhops with more zeal and vehemence than had ever been hitherto employed in that cauſe, though not with an unſhaken conſtancy and perſeverance; for, in difficult and perilous times, neceſſity ſometimes obliged him to yield, and to ſubmit ſeveral things to the judgment and authority of the church.

The vices of the clergy.

IV. This change, in the form of eccleſiaſtical government, was ſoon followed by a train of vices, which diſhonoured the character and authority of thoſe to whom the adminiſtration of the church was committed. For, though ſeveral yet continued to exhibit to the world illuſtrious examples of primitive piety and Chriſtian virtue, yet many were ſunk in luxury and voluptuouſneſs, puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and ambition, poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of contention and diſcord, and addicted to many other vices that caſt an undeſerved reproach upon the holy religion, of which they were the unworthy profeſſors and miniſters. This is teſtified in ſuch an ample manner, by the repeated complaints of many of the moſt reſpectable writers of this age [*s*], that truth will not permit us to ſpread the veil, which we ſhould otherwiſe be deſirous to caſt over ſuch enormities among an

[*s*] ORIGEN: *Comm. in Matthæum*, par. I. opp. p. 420. 441, 442. EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. viii. cap. 1. p. 291, &c.

order ſo ſacred. The *biſhops* aſſumed, in many places, a princely authority, particularly thoſe who had the greateſt number of churches under their inſpection, and who preſided over the moſt opulent aſſemblies. They appropriated to their evangelical function the ſplendid enſigns of temporal majeſty. A throne, ſurrounded with miniſters, exalted above his equals the ſervant of the meek and humble JESUS; and ſumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and the minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority. The example of the biſhops was ambitiouſly imitated by the *preſbyters*, who, neglecting the ſacred duties of their ſtation, abandoned themſelves to the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life. The *deacons*, beholding the preſbyters deſerting thus their functions, boldly uſurped their rights and privileges; and the effects of a corrupt ambition were ſpread through every rank of the ſacred order.

Hence the leſſer orders.

V. From what has been now obſerved, we may come, perhaps, at the true origin of *minor* or leſſer *orders*, which were, in this century, added every where to thoſe of the *biſhops*, *preſbyters*, and *deacons*. For, certainly, the titles and offices of *ſubdeacons*, *acolythi*, *oſtiarii*, or door-keepers, *readers*, *exorciſts*, and *copiatæ*, would never have been heard of in the church, if its rulers had been aſſiduouſly and zealouſly employed in promoting the intereſts of truth and piety by their labours and their example. But when the honours and privileges of the biſhops and preſbyters were augmented, the *deacons* alſo began to extend their ambitious views, and to deſpiſe thoſe lower functions and employments which they had hitherto exerciſed with ſuch humility and zeal. The additional orders that were now created to diminiſh the labours of the preſent rulers of the church, had functions allotted

to

CENT. III. PART II.

to them, which their names partly explain [*t*]. The inſtitution of *exorciſts* was a conſequence of the doctrine of the New Platoniſts, which the Chriſtians adopted, and which taught that the evil *genii*, or ſpirits, were continually hovering over human bodies, towards which they were carried by a natural and vehement deſire; and that vicious men were not ſo much impelled to ſin by an innate depravity, or by the ſeduction of ex-

☞ [*t*] The *ſubdeacons* were deſigned to eaſe the *deacons* of the meaneſt part of their work. Their office, conſequently, was to prepare the ſacred veſſels of the altar, and to deliver them to the deacons in time of divine ſervice; to attend the doors of the church during the communion-ſervice; to go on the biſhop's embaſſies, with his letters or meſſages to foreign churches. In a word, they were ſo ſubordinate to the ſuperior rulers of the church, that, by a canon of the council of *Laodicea*, they were forbidden to ſit in the preſence of a *deacon* without his leave.—The order of *acolythi* was peculiar to the Latin church; for there was no ſuch order in the Greek church during the four firſt centuries. Their name ſignifies *attendants*; and their principal office was to light the candles of the church, and to attend the miniſters with wine for the euchariſt. The *oſtiarii*, or *door-keepers*, were appointed to open and ſhut the doors, as officers and ſervants under the *deacons* and *ſub-deacons*; to give notice of the times of prayer and church aſſemblies, which, in time of perſecution, required a private ſignal for fear of diſcovery; and that probably was the firſt reaſon for inſtituting this order in the church of *Rome*, whoſe example, by degrees, was ſoon followed by other churches.—The *readers* were thoſe that were appointed to read the ſcripture in that part of divine ſervice to which the *catechumens* were admitted.—The *exorciſts* were appointed to drive out evil ſpirits from the bodies of perſons poſſeſſed; they had been long known in the church, but were not erected into an eccleſiaſtical order until the latter end of the third century.—The *copiatæ*, or *foſſarii*, were an order of the inferior clergy, whoſe buſineſs it was to take care of funerals, and to provide for the decent interment of the dead. In vain have BARONIUS and other Romiſh writers aſſerted, that theſe inferior orders were of apoſtolical inſtitution. The contrary is evidently proved, ſince none of theſe offices are mentioned as having taken place before the third century, and the origin can be traced no higher than the fourth.

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ample, as by the internal ſuggeſtions of ſome evil dæmons. The *copiatæ* were employed in providing for the decent interment of the dead.

Marriage of the clergy.

VI. Marriage was permitted to all the various ranks and orders of the clergy, high and low. Thoſe, however, who continued in a ſtate of celibacy, obtained by this abſtinence a higher reputation of ſanctity and virtue than others. This was owing to an almoſt general perſuaſion, that they, who took wives, were of all others the moſt ſubject to the influence of malignant dæmons [*u*]. And as it was of infinite importance to the intereſts of the church, that no impure or malevolent ſpirit entered into the bodies of ſuch as were appointed to govern, or to inſtruct others; ſo the people were deſirous that the clergy ſhould uſe their utmoſt efforts to abſtain from the pleaſures of the conjugal life. Many of the ſacred order, eſpecially in *Africa*, conſented to ſatisfy the deſires of the people, and endeavoured to do this in ſuch a manner as not to offer an entire violence to their own inclinations. For this purpoſe, they formed connexions with thoſe women who had made vows of perpetual chaſtity; and it was an ordinary thing for an eccleſiaſtic to admit one of theſe fair ſaints to the participation of his bed, but ſtill under the moſt ſolemn declarations, that nothing paſſed in this commerce that was contrary to the rules of chaſtity and virtue [*w*]. Theſe holy concubines were called, by the Greeks, Συνεισάκτοι; and by the Latins, *Mulieres ſubintroductæ*. This indecent cuſtom alarmed the zeal of the more pious among the biſhops, who employed the utmoſt efforts of their ſeverity and vigilance to abo-

Concubines introduced among the clergy.

[*u*] PORPHYRIUS, περὶ ἀποχῆς, lib. iv. p. 417.

[*w*] *Credat Judæus Apella.* See however DODWELL. *Diſſ. tertia Cyprianica*, and LUD. AN. MURATORIUS, *Diſſ. de Synaxis et Agapetis*, in his *Anecdot. Græc.* p. 218.; as alſo BALUZIUS *ad Cypriani Epiſtol.* p. 5. 12, &c.

CENT. III. PART II.

liſh it, though it was a long time before they entirely effected this laudable purpoſe.

The principal Greek and Oriental writers.

VII. Thus we have given a ſhort, though not a very pleaſing, view of the rulers of the church during this century; and ſhould now mention the principal writers that diſtinguiſhed themſelves in it by their learned and pious productions. The moſt eminent of theſe, whether we conſider the extent of his fame, or the multiplicity of his labours, was ORIGEN, a *preſbyter* and *catechiſt* of *Alexandria*, a man of vaſt and uncommon abilities, and the greateſt luminary of the Chriſtian world that this age exhibited to view. Had the juſtneſs of his judgment been equal to the immenſity of his genius, the fervor of his piety, his indefatigable patience, his extenſive erudition, and his other eminent and ſuperior talents, all encomiums muſt have fallen ſhort of his merit. Yet ſuch as he was, his virtues and his labours deſerve the admiration of all ages; and his name will be tranſmitted with honour through the annals of time as long as learning and genius ſhall be eſteemed among men [*x*].

The ſecond in renown among the writers of this century was JULIUS AFRICANUS, a native of *Paleſtine*, a man of the moſt profound erudition, but the greateſt part of whoſe learned labours are unhappily loſt.

HIPPOLYTUS, whoſe hiſtory is much involved in darkneſs [*y*], is alſo eſteemed among the moſt celebrated authors and martyrs of this age; but thoſe writings, which at preſent bear his name,

[*x*] See a very learned and uſeful work of the famous HUET biſhop of *Avranches*, intitled, *Origeniana*. See alſo DOUCIN, *Hiſtoire d'Origine et des mouvemens arrivés dans l'Egliſe au ſujet de ſa doctrine*; and BAYLE's *Dictionary*, at the article ORIGEN.

[*y*] The Benedictine monks have, with great labour and erudition, endeavoured to diſpel this darkneſs in their *Hiſtoire Litteraire de la France*, tom. i. p. 361.

are

are juſtly looked upon by many as either extremely corrupted, or entirely ſpurious.

GREGORY, biſhop of *New Cæſarea*, acquired, at this time, the title of *Thaumaturgus*, i. e. wonder-worker, on account of the variety of great and ſignal miracles, which he is ſaid to have wrought during the courſe of his miniſtry. Few of his works have come down to our times, and his miracles are called in queſtion by many, as unſupported by ſufficient evidence [z].

It were to be wiſhed that we had more of the writings of DIONYSIUS, biſhop of *Alexandria*, than thoſe which have ſurvived the ruins of time, ſince the few remaining fragments of his works diſcover the moſt conſummate wiſdom and prudence, and the moſt amiable ſpirit of moderation and candour, and thus abundantly vindicate, from all ſuſpicion of flattery, the ancients who mentioned him under the title of DIONYSIUS the GREAT [a].

METHODIUS appears to have been a man of great piety, and highly reſpectable on account of his eminent virtue; but thoſe of his works, which are yet extant, diſcover no great degree of penetration and acuteneſs in handling controverſy and weighing opinions.

VIII. CYPRIAN, biſhop of *Carthage*, a man of the moſt eminent abilities and flowing eloquence, ſtands foremoſt in the liſt of Latin writers. His letters, and indeed the moſt of his works, breathe ſuch a noble and pathetic ſpirit of piety, that it is impoſſible to read them without the warmeſt feelings of enthuſiaſm. We muſt however obſerve, that he would have been a better writer, had he been leſs attentive to the ornaments

The Latin writers.

[z] See Van DALE's preface to his Latin treatiſe concerning *Oracles*, p. 6.

[a] The hiſtory of DIONYSIUS is particularly illuſtrated by JAC. BASNAGE, in his *Hiſtoire de l'Égliſe*, tom. i. livr. ii. chap. v. p. 68.

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of rhetoric; and a better biſhop, had he been able to reſtrain the vehemence of his temper, and to diſtinguiſh, with more acuteneſs, between truth and falſhood.

The *dialogue* of MINUCIUS FELIX, which bears the title of *Octavius*, effaces with ſuch judgment, ſpirit, and force, the calumnies and reproaches that were caſt upon the Chriſtians by their adverſaries, that it deſerves an attentive peruſal from thoſe who are deſirous to know the ſtate of the church during this century.

The VII *Books* of ARNOBIUS, the African, written *againſt the Gentiles*, are a ſtill more copious and ample defence of the Chriſtians, and, though obſcure in ſeveral places, may yet be read with pleaſure and with profit. It is true, that this rhetorician, too little inſtructed in the Chriſtian religion when he wrote this work, has mingled great errors with ſolemn and important truths; and has exhibited Chriſtianity under a certain philoſophical form, very different from that in which it is commonly received.

We refer our readers, for an account of the authors of inferior note, who lived in this century, to thoſe who have profeſſedly given hiſtories or enumerations of the Chriſtian writers.

## CHAP. III.

### *Concerning the doctrine of the Chriſtian church, in this century.*

The ſtate of the Chriſtian doctrine.

I. THE principal doctrines of Chriſtianity were now explained to the people in their native purity and ſimplicity, without any mixture of abſtract reaſonings or ſubtile inventions; nor were the feeble minds of the multitude loaded with a great

great variety of precepts [*b*]. But the Chriſtian doctors, who had applied themſelves to the ſtudy of letters and philoſophy, ſoon abandoned the frequented paths, and ſtruck out into the devious wilds of fancy. The Egyptians diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this new method of explaining the truth. They looked upon it as a noble and a glorious taſk to bring the doctrines of celeſtial wiſdom into a certain ſubjection to the precepts of their philoſophy, and to make deep and profound reſearches into the intimate and hidden nature of thoſe truths which the divine Saviour had delivered to his diſciples. ORIGEN was at the head of this ſpeculative tribe. This great man, enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philoſophy, ſet it up as the teſt of all religion; and imagined, that the reaſons of each doctrine were to be found in that favourite philoſophy, and their nature and extent to be determined by it [*c*]. It muſt be confeſſed, that he handled this matter with modeſty and with caution; but he ſtill gave an example to his diſciples, the abuſe of which could not fail to be pernicious, and under the authority of which they would naturally indulge themſelves without reſtraint in every wanton fancy. And ſo, indeed, the caſe was: for the diſciples of ORIGEN, breaking forth from the limits fixed by their maſter, interpreted, in the moſt licentious manner, the divine truths of religion according to the tenor of the Platonic philoſophy. From theſe teachers the philoſophical, or *ſcholaſtic theology*, as it is called, derives its ori-

[*b*] See ORIGEN, *in Præf. libror. de Principiis*, tom i. opp. p. 49. and lib. i. *De Principiis*, cap. ii. See alſo GREGORII NEOCÆSARIENSIS, *Expoſitio Fidei*, p. 11. of his works, according to the addition of GER. VOSSIUS.

[*c*] This is manifeſt from what remains of his *Stromata*; as alſo from his books *De principiis*, which are ſtill preſerved in a Latin tranſlation of them by RUFFINUS.

gin; and, proceeding hence, paſſed through various forms and modifications according to the genius, turn, and erudition, of thoſe who embraced it.

The riſe of the myſtic theology.

II. The ſame principles gave riſe to another ſpecies of *theology*, which was called *myſtic*. And what muſt ſeem at firſt ſight ſurpriſing here is, that this *myſtic theology*, though formed at the ſame time, and derived from the ſame ſource, with the *ſcholaſtic*, yet had a natural tendency to overturn and deſtroy it. The authors of this *myſtic* ſcience are not known; but the principles from whence it ſprung are manifeſt. Its firſt promoters proceeded from that known doctrine of the Platonic ſchool, which alſo was adopted by ORIGEN and his diſciples, that *the divine nature was diffuſed through all human ſouls*; or, in other words, that *the faculty of reaſon*, from which proceeds the health and vigour of the mind, was an *emanation from God into the human ſoul, and comprehended in it the principles and elements of all truth, human and divine.* They denied that men could, by labour or ſtudy, excite this celeſtial flame in their breaſts; and therefore they diſapproved highly of the attempts of thoſe who, by definitions, abſtract theorems, and profound ſpeculations, endeavoured to form diſtinct notions of truth, and to diſcover its hidden nature. On the contrary, they maintained, that *ſilence*, *tranquillity*, *repoſe*, and *ſolitude*, accompanied with ſuch acts of mortification as might tend to extenuate and exhauſt the body, were the *means* by which the *hidden* and *internal word* was *excited* to produce its latent virtues, and to inſtruct men in the knowledge of divine things. For thus they reaſoned: "They who behold with a noble "contempt all human affairs, who turn away "their eyes from terreſtrial vanities, and ſhut "all the avenues of the outward ſenſes againſt "the contagious influences of a material world,

"muſt

" muſt neceſſarily return to God, when the ſpirit " is thus diſengaged from the impediments that " prevented that happy union. And in this " bleſſed frame, they not only enjoy inexpreſſible " raptures from their communion with the Su- " preme Being, but alſo are inveſted with the in- " eſtimable privilege of contemplating truth un- " diſguiſed and uncorrupted in its native purity, " while others behold it in a vitiated and deluſive " form."

Hence the riſe of monks and hermits.

III. This method of reaſoning produced ſtrange effects, and drove many into caves and deſarts, where they macerated their bodies with hunger and thirſt, and ſubmitted to all the miſeries of the ſevereſt diſcipline that a gloomy imagination could preſcribe. And it is not improbable that PAUL, the firſt hermit, was rather engaged by this fanatical ſyſtem, than by the perſecution under DECIUS, to fly into the moſt ſolitary deſarts of *Thebais*, where he led, during the ſpace of ninety years, a life more worthy of a ſavage animal than of a rational being [*d*]. It is, however, to be obſerved, that though PAUL is placed at the head of the order of *Hermits*, yet that unſociable manner of life was very common in *Egypt*, *Syria*, *India*, and *Meſopotamia*, not only long before his time, but even before the coming of CHRIST. And it is ſtill practiſed among the Mahometans, as well as the Chriſtians, in thoſe arid and burning climates [*e*]. For the glowing atmoſphere that ſurrounds theſe countries is a natural cauſe of that love of ſolitude and repoſe, of that indolent and melancholy diſpoſition, that are remarkably common among their languid inhabitants.

IV. But let us turn away our eyes from theſe ſcenes of fanaticiſm, which are ſo opprobrious to

[*d*] The life of this hermit was written by JEROM.

[*e*] See the travels of LUCAS, in the year 1714, ſecond volume, p. 363.

human nature, and conſider ſome other circumſtances that belong more or leſs to the hiſtory of the Chriſtian doctrine during this century. And here it is proper to mention the uſeful labours of thoſe, who manifeſted their zeal for the holy ſcriptures by the care they took to have accurate copies of them multiplied every where, and that at ſuch moderate prices, as rendered them of eaſy purchaſe; as alſo to have them tranſlated into various languages, and publiſhed in correct editions. Many of the more opulent among the Chriſtians contributed generouſly a great part of their ſubſtance to the carrying on theſe pious and excellent undertakings. PIERIUS and HESYCHIUS in *Egypt*, and LUCIAN at *Antioch*, employed much pains in correcting the copies of the *Septuagint*; and PAMPHIDUS of *Cæſarea* laboured with great diligence and ſucceſs in works of the ſame nature, until a glorious martyrdom finiſhed his courſe. But ORIGEN ſurpaſſed all others in diligence and aſſiduity; and his famous *Hexapla*, though almoſt entirely deſtroyed by the waſte of time, will, even in its fragments, remain an eternal monument of the incredible application with which that great man laboured to remove thoſe obſtacles which retarded the progreſs of the goſpel [*f*].

The zeal of many in ſpreading abroad the ſacred writings.

V. After the encomiums we have given to ORIGEN, who has an undoubted right to the firſt place among the interpreters of the ſcriptures in this century, it is not without a deep concern that we are obliged to add, that he alſo, by an unhappy method, opened a ſecure retreat for all ſorts of errors that a wild and irregular imagination could bring forth. Having entertained a notion that it

Origen's method of interpreting the ſcriptures.

[*f*] The fragments that yet remain of ORIGEN's *Hexapla*, were collected and publiſhed, by the learned MONTFAUCON, in folio, at *Paris*, in 1713. See alſo upon this head BUDDEI *Iſagoge in Theolog.* tom. ii. p. 1581; and CARPZOVII *Critic. Sacr. Veter. Teſtam.* p. 574.

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was extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, to defend every thing contained in the ſacred writings from the cavils of heretics and infidels, ſo long as they were explained *literally*, according to the real import of the terms, he had recourſe to the fecundity of a lively imagination, and maintained, that the holy ſcriptures were to be interpreted in the ſame *allegorical* manner that the Platoniſts explained the hiſtory of the gods. In conſequence of this pernicious rule of interpretation, he alleged, that the words of ſcripture were, in many places, abſolutely void of ſenſe; and that though in others there were, indeed, certain notions conveyed under the outward terms according to their literal force and import, yet it was not in theſe that the true meaning of the ſacred writers was to be ſought, but in a myſterious and hidden ſenſe ariſing from the nature of the things themſelves [*g*]. This *hidden ſenſe* he endeavours to inveſtigate throughout his *commentaries*, neglecting and deſpiſing, for the moſt part, the *outward letter*; and in this devious path he diſplays the moſt ingenious ſtrokes of fancy, though always at the expence of truth, whoſe divine ſimplicity is ſcarcely diſcernible through the cobweb-veil of allegory [*b*]. Nor did the inventions of ORIGEN end

[*g*] For a further illuſtration of this matter, the reader may conſult the excellent preface of DE LA RUE, to the ſecond volume of the works of ORIGEN, publiſhed in folio at *Paris*, in the year 1733. An accurate and full account of ORIGEN's method of interpreting the ſcripture may be found in the work intitled *Commentar. de rebus Chriſtian. ante Conſtantinum M.* p. 629; where the philoſophy and theology of that great man, and his controverſy with DEMETRIUS biſhop of *Alexandria*, are treated of profeſſedly, and at large.

[*b*] ORIGEN, in his *Stromata*, book x. expreſſes himſelf in the following manner: "The ſource of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or *external* part of ſcripture. Thoſe "who do ſo, ſhall not attain to the kingdom of God. Let "us, therefore, ſeek after the ſpirit and the ſubſtantial fruit

CENT. III. PART II.

end here. He divided this *hidden ſenſe*, which he purſued with ſuch eagerneſs, into *moral*, and *myſtical* or *ſpiritual*. The *moral* ſenſe of ſcripture diſplays thoſe doctrines that relate to the inward ſtate of the ſoul, and the conduct of life. The *myſtical* or *ſpiritual ſenſe* repreſents the nature, the laws, and the hiſtory, of the *ſpiritual* or *myſtical world*. We are not yet at the end of the labyrinth; for he ſubdivided this *myſtical* world of his own creation into two diſtinct regions, the one of which he called the *ſuperior*, i. e. *heaven*; and the other the *inferior*, by which he meant the *church*. This led to another diviſion of the *myſtical ſenſe* into an earthly or *allegorical* ſenſe, adapted to the inferior world, and a celeſtial or *anagogetical* one, adapted to the *ſuperior* region. This chimerical method of explaining the ſcripture was, before ORIGEN, received by many Chriſtians, who were deluded into it by the example of the Jews. But as this learned man reduced it into a ſyſtem, and founded it upon fixed and determinate rules, he is, on that account, commonly conſidered as its principal author.

Other interpreters.

VI. A prodigious number of interpreters, both in this and the ſucceeding ages, followed the method of ORIGEN, though with ſome variations;

" of the word, which are hidden and myſterious." And again: " The ſcriptures are of little uſe to thoſe who under- " ſtand them as they are written." One would think it impoſſible that ſuch expreſſions ſhould drop from the pen of a wiſe man. But the philoſophy, which this great man embraced with ſuch zeal, was one of the ſources of his deluſion. He could not find in the Bible the opinions he had adopted, as long as he interpreted that ſacred book according to its literal ſenſe. But PLATO, ARISTOTLE, ZENO, and, indeed, the whole philoſophical tribe, could not fail to obtain, for their ſentiments, a place in the goſpel, when it was interpreted by the wanton inventions of fancy, and upon the ſuppoſition of a *hidden ſenſe*, to which it was poſſible to give all ſorts of forms. Hence all who deſired to model Chriſtianity according to their fancy, or their favourite ſyſtem of philoſophy, embraced ORIGEN's method of interpretation.

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nor could the few, who explained the ſacred writings with judgment, and a true ſpirit of criticiſm, oppoſe, with any ſucceſs, the torrent of allegory that was overflowing the church. The *commentaries* of HIPPOLYTUS, which are yet extant, ſhew manifeſtly, that this good man was entirely addicted to the ſyſtem of ORIGEN, and the ſame judgment may be hazarded concerning VICTORINUS's *explications* of certain books of the Old and New Teſtament, though theſe explications are, long ſince, loſt. The *tranſlation of the Eccleſiaſtes* by GREGORY THAUMATURGUS, which is yet remaining, is not chargeable with this reproach, notwithſtanding the tender and warm attachment of its author to ORIGEN. The book of *Geneſis*, and *the Song of Solomon* were explained by METHODIUS, whoſe work is loſt; and AMMONIUS compoſed a *Harmony of the Goſpels*.

Didactic writers in theology.

VII. The doctrinal part of theology employed the pens of many learned men in this century. In his *Stromata*, and his *four books of Elements*, ORIGEN illuſtrated the greateſt part of the doctrines of Chriſtianity, or, to ſpeak more properly, rather diſguiſed them under the lines of a vain philoſophy. Theſe books of *elements*, or *principles*, were the firſt ſketch that appeared of the *ſcholaſtic* or *philoſophical theology*. Something of the ſame nature was attempted by THEOGNOSTUS, in his *ſeven books of Hypotypoſes*, which are only known at preſent by the extracts of them in PHOTIUS, who repreſents them as the work of one who was infected with the notions of ORIGEN. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS drew up a brief ſummary of the Chriſtian religion, in his *Expoſition of the faith*; and many treated, in a more ample manner, particular points of doctrine in oppoſition to the enemies and corruptors of Chriſtianity. Thus HIPPOLYTUS wrote concerning the *deity*, the *reſurrection*, *anti-chriſt*, and the *end of the world*;

CENT. III. PART II.

METHODIUS, concerning *free will*; and LUCIAN, concerning *faith*. It is doubtful in what claſs theſe productions are to be placed, as the moſt of them have periſhed among the ruins of time.

Moral writers.

VIII. Among the moral writers, the firſt place, after TERTULLIAN, of whom we have already ſpoken above, is due to CYPRIAN, a prelate of eminent merit, who publiſhed ſeveral treatiſes concerning *patience*, *mortality*, *works*, *alms*, as alſo an *exhortation to martyrdom*. In theſe diſſertations, there are many excellent things; but there runs through them all a general want of order, preciſion, and method; nor do we always find ſolid proofs in favour of the deciſions they contain [*i*]. ORIGEN has written many treatiſes of this kind, and among others, an *exhortation* to ſuffer martyrdom for the truth; a ſubject handled by many authors in this century, but with unequal eloquence and penetration. METHODIUS treated of *chaſtity*, in a work intitled, *Sympoſium Virginum*, or, the *Feaſt of Virgins*; but this treatiſe is full of confuſion and diſorder. DIONYSIUS handled the doctrine of *penance* and *temptations*. The other moral writers of this period are too obſcure and trivial to render the mention of them neceſſary.

Polemic divines.

IX. The controverſial writers were exceeding numerous in this century. The Pagans were attacked, and that in a victorious manner, by MINUCIUS FELIX, in his dialogue called *Octavius*; by ORIGEN, in his writings againſt CELSUS; by ARNOBIUS, in his *ſeven books againſt the Gentiles*; and CYPRIAN, in his treatiſe concerning the *vanity of idols*. The *chronicle* of HIPPOLYTUS, in oppoſition to the Gentiles; and the work of METHODIUS

[*i*] See BARBEYRAC, *De la Morale des Peres*, ch. viii. p. 104.

THODIUS againſt PORPHYRY, that bitter adverſary of the Chriſtians, are both loſt.

CENT. III. PART II.

We may alſo reckon, in the number of the Polemic writers, thoſe who wrote againſt the philoſophers, or who treated any ſubjects that were diſputed between different ſects. Such was HIPPOLYTUS, who wrote againſt PLATO, and who alſo treated the niceſt, the moſt difficult, and the moſt controverted ſubjects, ſuch as *fate*, *free-will*, and the *origin of evil*, which exerciſed, likewiſe, the pens of METHODIUS and other acute writers. What HIPPOLYTUS wrote againſt the Jews, is not come down to our times; but the work of CYPRIAN, upon that ſubject, yet remains [*k*]. ORIGEN, VICTORINUS, HIPPOLYTUS, attacked, in general, all various ſects and hereſies, that divided the church, but their labours, in that immenſe field, have entirely diſappeared; and as to thoſe, who only turned their controverſial arms againſt ſome few ſects, and certain particular doctrines, we think it not neceſſary to enumerate them here.

X. It is, however, neceſſary to obſerve, that the methods now uſed of defending Chriſtianity, and attacking Judaiſm and idolatry, degenerated much from the primitive ſimplicity, and the true rule of controverſy. The Chriſtian doctors, who had been educated in the ſchools of the rhetoricians and ſophiſts, raſhly employed the arts and evaſions of their ſubtle maſters in the ſervice of Chriſtianity; and, intent only upon defeating the enemy, they were too little attentive to the means of victory, indifferent whether they acquired it by artifice or plain-dealing. This method of diſputing, which the ancients called *œconomical* [*l*], and which had victory for its object,

The vicious method of controverſy now employed.

☞ [*k*] This work is intitled, *Teſtimonia contra Judæos*.

[*l*] SOUVERAIN, *Platoniſm devoilé*, p. 244. DAILLE, *De uſu*

ject, rather than truth, was, in conſequence of the prevailing taſte for rhetoric and ſophiſtry, almoſt univerſally approved. The Platoniſts contributed to the ſupport and encouragement of this ungenerous method of diſputing, by that maxim of theirs which aſſerted the innocence of defending the truth by artifice and falſehood. This will appear manifeſt to thoſe who have read, with any meaſure of penetration and judgment, the arguments of ORIGEN againſt CELSUS, and thoſe of the other Chriſtian diſputants againſt the idolatrous Gentiles. The method of TERTULLIAN, who uſed to plead preſcription againſt erroneous doctors, was not, perhaps, unfair in this century; but they muſt be much acquainted both with the times, and, indeed, with the nature of things, who imagine that it is always allowable to employ this method [*m*].

Suppoſititious or ſpurious writings.

XI. This diſingenuous and vicious method of ſurpriſing their adverſaries by artifice, and ſtriking them down, as it were, by lies and fictions, produced, among other diſagreeable effects, a great number of books, which were falſely attributed to certain great men, in order to give theſe ſpurious productions more credit and weight. For, as the greateſt part of mankind are leſs governed by reaſon than by authority, and prefer, in many caſes, the deciſions of fallible mortals

*vet. uſu Patrum*, lib. i. p. 160. Jo. CHRISTOPH. WOLFII *Caſauboniana*, p. 100. Concerning the famous rule, *to do a thing*, κατ' οἰκονομίαν, or *œconomically*: ſee particularly the ample illuſtrations of GATAKER, *ad Marci Antonini*, lib. xi. p. 330, &c.

☞ [*m*] We ſcarcely know any caſe, in which the plea of *preſcription* can be admitted as a ſatisfactory argument, in favour of religious tenets or articles of faith, unleſs by *preſcription* be meant, *a doctrine's being eſtabliſhed in the time and by the authority of the apoſtles*. In all other caſes, *preſcription* is no argument at all: it cannot recommend *error*, and *truth* has no need of its ſupport.

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to the unerring dictates of the divine word, the diſputants, of whom we are now ſpeaking, thought they could not ſerve the truth more effectually than by oppoſing illuſtrious names and reſpectable authorities to the attacks of its adverſaries. Hence, the book of *canons*, which certain artful men aſcribed falſely to the apoſtles; hence, the *apoſtolical conſtitutions*, of which CLEMENT, biſhop of *Rome*, is ſaid to have formed a collection; hence the *recognitions* and the *clementina*, which are alſo attributed to CLEMENT [*n*], and many other productions of that nature, which, for a long time, were too much eſteemed by credulous men.

Nor were the managers of controverſy the only perſons who employed theſe ſtratagems; the Myſtics had recourſe to the ſame pious frauds to ſupport their ſect. And, accordingly, when they were aſked from what chief their eſtabliſhment took its riſe, to get clear of this perplexing queſtion, they feigned a chief, and choſe, for that purpoſe, DIONYSIUS the Areopagite, a man of almoſt apoſtolical weight and authority, who was converted to Chriſtianity, in the firſt century, by the preaching of St. PAUL at *Athens*. And to render this fiction more ſpecious, they attributed to this great man various treatiſes concerning the *monaſtic life*, the *myſtic theology*, and other ſubjects of that nature, which were the productions of ſome ſenſeleſs and inſipid writers of after-times. Thus it happened, through the pernicious influ-

☞ [*n*] It is not with the utmoſt accuracy that Dr. MOSHEIM places the *recognitions* among the ſpurious works of antiquity, ſince they are quoted by ORIGEN, EPIPHANIUS, and RUFFIN, as the work of CLEMENT. It is true, indeed, that theſe writers own them to have been altered in ſeveral places, and falſified by the heretic; and EPIPHANIUS, particularly, tells us, that the Ebionites ſcarcely left any thing ſound in them. As to the *Clementina*, they were undoubtedly ſpurious.

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CENT. III. PART II.

ence of human paſſions, which too often mingle themſelves with the execution of the beſt purpoſes and the moſt upright intentions, that they, who were deſirous of ſurpaſſing all others in piety, looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable, to advance the cauſe of piety by artifice and fraud.

Controverſy concerning the millennium.

XII. The moſt famous controverſies that divided the Chriſtians during this century, were thoſe concerning the *millennium*, or *reign of a thouſand years*; the *baptiſm of heretics*, and the *doctrine of* ORIGEN.

Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed that CHRIST was to come and reign a thouſand years among men, before the entire and final diſſolution of this world. This opinion, which had hitherto met with no oppoſition, was differently interpreted by different perſons; nor did all promiſe themſelves the ſame kind of enjoyments in that future and glorious kingdom [*o*]. But in this century its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of ORIGEN, who oppoſed it with the greateſt warmth, becauſe it was incompatible with ſome of his favourite ſentiments [*p*]. NEPOS, an Egyptian biſhop, endeavoured to reſtore this opinion to its former credit, in a book written *againſt the allegoriſts*, for ſo he called, by way of contempt, the adverſaries of the Millenarian ſyſtem. This work, and the hypotheſis it defended, was extremely well received by great

☞ [*o*] See the learned *Treatiſe concerning the true millennium*, which Dr. WHITBY has ſubjoined to the ſecond volume of his *Commentary upon the New Teſtament*. See alſo, for an account of the doctrine of the ancient Millennarians, the fourth, fifth, ſeventh, and ninth volumes of LARDNER's *Credibility*, &c.

[*p*] See ORIGEN, *De principiis*, lib. ii. cap. xi. p. 104. tom. i. opp.

numbers

numbers in the canton of *Arsinoë*; and among others by COLUCION, a presbyter of no mean influence and reputation. But DIONYSIUS of *Alexandria*, a disciple of ORIGEN, stopped the growing progress of this doctrine by his private discourse, and also by two learned and judicious dissertations concerning the *divine promises* [q].

Concerning the baptism of heretics.

XIII. The disputes concerning the *baptism of heretics* were not carried on with that amiable spirit of candor, moderation, and impartiality with which DIONYSIUS opposed the MILLENNIAN doctrine. The warmth and violence that were exerted in this controversy, were far from being edifying to such as were acquainted with the true genius of Christianity, and with that meekness and forbearance that should particularly distinguish its doctors.

As there was no express law which determined the manner and form, according to which those who abandoned the heretical sects were to be received into the communion of the church, the rules practised in this matter were not the same in all Christian churches. Many of the Oriental and African Christians placed recanting heretics in the rank of catechumens, and admitted them, by *baptism*, into the communion of the faithful; while the greatest part of the European churches, considering the baptism of heretics as valid, used no other forms in their reception than the *imposition of hands*, accompanied with solemn prayer. This diversity prevailed for a long time without kindling contentions, or animosities. But, at length, charity waxed cold, and the fire of ecclesiastical discord broke out. In this century, the Asiatic Christians came to a determination in a

[q] See EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xxiv. p. 271; as also GENNADIUS, *De dogmatibus Ecclesiasticis*, cap. lv. p. 32. edit. Elmenhost.

point

CENT. III. PART II.

point that was hitherto, in ſome meaſure, undecided; and in more than one council eſtabliſhed it as a law, that all heretics were to be re-baptized before their admiſſion to the communion of the true church [r]. When STEPHEN, biſhop of *Rome*, was informed of this determination, he behaved with the moſt unchriſtian violence and arrogance towards the Aſiatic Chriſtians, broke communion with them, and excluded them from the communion of the church of *Rome*. Theſe haughty proceedings made no impreſſion upon CYPRIAN biſhop of *Carthage*, who, notwithſtanding the menaces of the Roman pontif, aſſembled a council on this occaſion, adopted, with the reſt of the African biſhops, the opinion of the Aſiatics, and gave notice thereof to the imperious STEPHEN. The fury of the latter was redoubled at this notification, and produced many threatenings and invectives againſt CYPRIAN, who replied, with great force and reſolution, and, in a ſecond council held at *Carthage*, declared the baptiſm, adminiſtered by heretics, void of all efficacy and validity. Upon this, the choler of STEPHEN ſwelled beyond meaſure, and, by a decree full of invectives, which was received with contempt, he excommunicated the African biſhops, whoſe moderation, on the one hand, and the death of their imperious antagoniſt on the other, put an end to the violent controverſy [s].

Diſputes concerning Origen.

XIV. The controverſy concerning ORIGEN was ſet in motion by DEMETRIUS, biſhop of

[r] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. v. vii. FIRMILIANUS, *Epiſtol. ad Cyprianum*, printed among CYPRIAN's *Letters*, Lett. lxxv.

[s] CYPRIAN, *Epiſt.* lxx. p. 124. lxxiii. p. 129. AUGUSTIN. *De Baptiſmo contra Donatiſtas*, lib. v. vii. tom. ix. opp. where are to be found the acts of the council of *Carthage*, A. D. 256. PRUD. MARANI *vita Cypriani*, p. 107.

*Alexandria*; animated, as ſome ſay, by a principle of envy and hatred againſt this learned man, with whom he had formerly lived in an intimate friendſhip. The aſſertion, however, of thoſe who attribute the oppoſition of DEMETRIUS to this odious principle, appears ſomething more than doubtful; for, in the whole of his conduct towards ORIGEN, there are no viſible marks of envy, though many indeed of paſſion and arrogance, of violence and injuſtice. The occaſion of all this was as follows: In the year 228, ORIGEN having ſet out for *Achaia*, was, in his journey thither, received with ſingular marks of affection and eſteem by the biſhops of *Cæſarea* and *Jeruſalem*, who ordained him *preſbyter* by impoſition of hands. This proceeding gave high offence to DEMETRIUS, who declared ORIGEN unworthy of the prieſthood, becauſe he had caſtrated himſelf, and maintained, at the ſame time, that it was not lawful to advance, to a higher dignity, the principal of the *Alexandrian* ſchool, which was under his epiſcopal inſpection, without his knowledge and approbation. A concluſion, however, was put to theſe warm debates, and ORIGEN returned to *Alexandria*. This calm was, indeed, but of a ſhort duration, being ſoon ſucceeded by a new breach between him and DEMETRIUS, the occaſion of which is not known, but which grew to ſuch a height as obliged ORIGEN, in the year 231, to abandon his charge at *Alexandria*, and retire to *Cæſarea*. His abſence, however, did not appeaſe the reſentment of DEMETRIUS, who continued to perſecute him with the utmoſt violence. To ſatisfy fully his vengeance againſt ORIGEN, he aſſembled two councils, in the firſt of which he condemned him unheard, and deprived him of his office; and in the ſecond, had him degraded from the ſacerdotal dignity. It is probable, that in one of thoſe councils,

CENT. III. PART II.

councils, especially the latter, DEMETRIUS accused him of erroneous sentiments in matters of religion; for it was about this time that ORIGEN published his *book of principles*, which contains several opinions of a dangerous tendency [*t*]. The greatest part of the Christian bishops approved of the proceedings of the Alexandrian council, against which the bishops of the churches of *Achaia*, *Palestine*, *Phœnicia*, and *Arabia*, declared at the same time the highest displeasure [*u*].

☞ [*t*] This work, which was a sort of introduction to theology, has only come down to us in the translation of RUFFINUS, who corrected and maimed it, in order to render it more conformable to the orthodox doctrine of the church than ORIGEN had left it. It contains, however, even in its present form, several bold and singular opinions, such as the pre-existence of souls, and their fall into mortal bodies, in consequence of their deviation from the laws of order in their first state, and the final restoration of all intelligent beings to order and happiness. RUFFINUS, in his apology for ORIGEN, alleges, that his writings were maliciously falsified by the heretics; and that, in consequence thereof, many errors were attributed to him, which he did not adopt; as also, that the opinions, in which he differed from the doctrines of the church, were only proposed by him as curious conjectures.

[*u*] The accounts here given of the persecution of ORIGEN, are drawn from the most early and authentic sources, such as EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xxiv. PHOTIUS, *Bibl. Cod.* cxviii. JEROM's *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*, and from ORIGEN himself; and they differ in some respects from those, which common writers, such as DOUCIN, HUET, and others, give of this matter.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

### *Concerning the rites and ceremonies uſed in the church during this century.*



I. ALL the records of this century mention the multiplication of rites and ceremonies in the Chriſtian church. Several of the cauſes that contributed to this, have been already pointed out; to which we may add, as a principal one, the paſſion which now reigned for the Platonic philoſophy, or rather, for the popular Oriental ſuperſtition concerning *demons*, adopted by the Platoniſts, and borrowed, unhappily, from them, by the Chriſtian doctors. For there is not the leaſt doubt, but that many of the rites, now introduced into the church, derived their origin from the reigning opinions concerning the nature of *demons*, and the *powers* and *operations* of *inviſible beings*. Hence the uſe of *exorciſms* and *ſpells*, the frequency of *faſts*, and the averſion to *wedlock*. Hence the cuſtom of avoiding all connexions with thoſe who were not as yet baptized, or who lay under the penalty of excommunication, as perſons ſuppoſed to be under the dominion of ſome malignant ſpirit. And hence the rigour and ſeverity of that diſcipline and penance that were impoſed upon thoſe who had incurred, by their immoralities, the cenſures of the church [*w*]. Rites multiplied.

II. In moſt of the provinces there were, at this time, certain fixed places ſet apart for public Public worſhip.

[*w*] For an ampler account of this matter, the reader may conſult PORPHYRY's treatiſe concerning *Abſtinence*, and compare what that writer has ſaid on the ſubject, with the cuſtoms received among the Chriſtians. Several curious things are alſo to be found in THEODORET and EUSEBIUS upon this head.

CENT. III. PART II.

worſhip among the Chriſtians, as will appear evident to every impartial inquirer into theſe matters. Nor is it abſolutely improbable, that theſe churches were, in ſeveral places, embelliſhed with images and other ornaments.

With reſpect to the form of divine worſhip, and the times appointed for its celebration, there were little innovations made in this century. Two things, however, deſerve to be taken notice of here: the firſt is, that the diſcourſes or ſermons, addreſſed to the people, were very different from thoſe of the earlier times of the church, and degenerated much from the ancient ſimplicity. For, not to ſay any thing of ORIGEN, who introduced long ſermons, and was the firſt who explained the ſcriptures in his diſcourſes, ſeveral biſhops, who had received their education in the ſchools of the rhetoricians, were exactly ſcrupulous, in adapting their public exhortations and diſcourſes to the rules of Grecian eloquence. And this method gained ſuch credit, as to be ſoon, almoſt univerſally followed. The ſecond thing that we propoſed to mention as worthy of notice is, that, about this time, the uſe of *incenſe* was introduced, at leaſt, into many churches. This has been denied by ſome men of eminent learning; the fact, however, is rendered evident, by the moſt unexceptionable teſtimonies [*x*].

*Adminiſtration of the Lord's-ſupper.*

III. Several alterations were now introduced, in the celebration of the Lord's-ſupper, by thoſe who had the direction of divine worſhip. The prayers, uſed upon this occaſion, were lengthened; and the ſolemnity and pomp, with which this important inſtitution was celebrated, were conſiderably increaſed; no doubt, with a pious

[*x*] See biſhop BEVEREGE *ad Canon.* iii. *Apoſtol.* p. 461; as alſo another work of the ſame author, intitled, *Codex Canon. vindicatus*, p. 78.

intention

intention to render it ſtill more reſpectable. Thoſe who were in a *penitential ſtate*, and thoſe alſo who had not received the ſacrament of baptiſm, were not admitted to this holy ſupper; and it is not difficult to perceive, that theſe excluſions were an imitation of what was practiſed in the heathen myſteries. We find, by the accounts of PRUDENTIUS [y] and others, that gold and ſilver veſſels were now uſed in the adminiſtration of the Lord's-ſupper; nor is there any reaſon why we ſhould not adopt this opinion, ſince it is very natural to imagine, that thoſe churches, which were compoſed of the moſt opulent members, would readily indulge themſelves in this piece of religious pomp. As to the time of celebrating this ſolemn ordinance, it muſt be carefully obſerved, that there was a conſiderable variation in different churches, ariſing from their different circumſtances, and founded upon reaſons of prudence and neceſſity. In ſome, it was celebrated in the morning; in others, at noon; and in others, in the evening. It was alſo more frequently repeated in ſome churches, than in others; but was conſidered in all as of the higheſt importance, and as eſſential to ſalvation; for which reaſon it was even thought proper to adminiſter it to infants. The ſacred feaſts, that accompanied this venerable inſtitution, preceded its celebration in ſome churches, and followed it in others.

Baptiſm.

IV. There were, twice a year, ſtated times, when baptiſm was adminiſtered to ſuch as, after a long courſe of trial and preparation, offered themſelves as candidates for the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. This ceremony was performed only in the preſence of ſuch as were already initiated into the Chriſtian myſteries. The remiſſion of

[y] Περὶ στεφαν. *Hymn* ii. p. 60. edit. Heinſii.

CENT. III. PART II.

ſins was thought to be its immediate and happy fruit; while the biſhop, by prayer and the impoſition of hands, was ſuppoſed to confer thoſe ſanctifying gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, that are neceſſary to a life of righteouſneſs and virtue [z]. We have already mentioned the principal rites that were uſed in the adminiſtration of baptiſm; and we have only to add, that none were admitted to this ſolemn ordinance, until, by the menacing and formidable ſhouts and declamation of the *exorciſt*, they had been delivered from the dominion of the prince of darkneſs, and conſecrated to the ſervice of God. The origin of this ſuperſtitious ceremony may be eaſily traced, when we conſider the prevailing opinions of the times. The Chriſtians, in general, were perſuaded, that rational ſouls, deriving their exiſtence from God, muſt conſequently be in themſelves pure, holy, and endowed with the noble principles of liberty and virtue. But upon this ſuppoſition, it was difficult to account for the corrupt propenſities and actions of men, any other way, than by attributing them either to the malignant nature of *matter*, or the influence and impulſe of ſome *evil ſpirit*, who was perpetually compelling them to ſin. The former of theſe opinions was embraced by the Gnoſtics, but was rejected by true Chriſtians, who denied the eternity of matter, conſidered it as a creature of God,

[z] That ſuch was the notion prevalent at this time, is evident from teſtimonies of ſufficient weight. And as this point is of great conſequence in order to our underſtanding the theology of the ancients, which differs from ours in many reſpects, we ſhall mention one of theſe teſtimonies, even that of CYPRIAN, who, in his lxxiii Letter, expreſſes himſelf thus: "It is manifeſt where, and by whom, the REMISSION "OF SINS, which is CONFERRED in BAPTISM, is adminiſter-"ed.—They who are preſented to the rulers of the church, OB-"TAIN, by our prayers and impoſition of hands, the HOLY "GHOST." See alſo EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. viii.

and

and therefore adopted the latter notion, that in all vicious perſons there was a certain *evil being*, the author and ſource of their corrupt diſpoſitions and their unrighteous deeds [*a*]. The driving out this *demon* was now conſidered as an eſſential preparation for baptiſm, after the adminiſtration of which, the candidates returned home, adorned with crowns, and arrayed in white garments, as ſacred emblems; the former, of their victory over ſin and the world; the latter, of their inward purity and innocence.

V. *Faſting* began now to be held in more eſteem than it had formerly been; a high degree of ſanctity was attributed to this practice, and it was even looked upon as of indiſpenſable neceſſity, from a notion that the *demons* directed their ſtratagems principally againſt thoſe who pampered themſelves with delicious fare, and were leſs troubleſome to the lean and the hungry, who lived under the ſeverities of a rigorous abſtinence [*b*]. The Latins, contrary to the general cuſtom, faſted the ſeventh day of the week; and as the Greeks and Orientals refuſed to follow their example here, this afforded a new ſubject of contention between them. Faſting.

The Chriſtians offered up their ordinary prayers at three ſtated times of the day, *viz.* at the *third*, the *ſixth*, and the *ninth hour*, according to the Prayers.

[*a*] It is demonſtrably evident, that *exorciſm* was added to the other baptiſmal rites in the third century, after the introduction of the Platonic philoſophy into the church. For, before this time, we hear no mention made of it. JUSTIN MARTYR, in his *ſecond apology*, and TERTULLIAN, in his book concerning the *military crown*, give us an account of the ceremonies uſed in baptiſm during the ſecond century, without any mention of *exorciſm*. This is a very ſtrong argument of its being poſterior to theſe two great men; and is every way proper to perſuade us, that it made its entrance into the Chriſtian church in the third century, and probably firſt in *Egypt*.

[*b*] CLEMENTIN. *Homil.* ix. § 9. p. 688. PORPHYR. *De abſtinentia*, lib. iv. p. 417.

CENT. III. PART II.

cuſtom obſerved among the Jews. But, beſides theſe ſtated devotions, true believers were aſſiduous in their addreſſes to the Supreme Being, and poured forth frequently their vows and ſupplications before his throne, becauſe they conſidered prayer as the moſt eſſential duty, as well as the nobleſt employment, of a ſanctified nature. At thoſe feſtivals, which recalled the memory of ſome joyful event, and were to be celebrated with expreſſions of thankſgiving and praiſe, they prayed ſtanding, as they thought that poſture the fitteſt to expreſs their joy and their confidence. On days of contrition and faſting, they preſented themſelves upon their knees before the throne of the Moſt High, to expreſs their profound humiliation and ſelf-abaſement. Certain forms of prayer were, undoubtedly, uſed in many places both in public and in private; but many alſo expreſſed their pious feelings in the natural effuſions of an unpremeditated eloquence.

The ſign of the croſs uſed by Chriſtians.

The *ſign of the croſs* was ſuppoſed to adminiſter a victorious power over all ſorts of trials and calamities, and was more eſpecially conſidered as the ſureſt defence againſt the ſnares and ſtratagems of malignant ſpirits. And hence it was, that no Chriſtian undertook any thing of moment, without arming himſelf with the influence of this triumphant ſign.

## CHAP. V.

### *Concerning the diviſions and hereſies that troubled the church during this century.*

Remains of the ancient ſects.

I. THE ſame ſects that, in the former ages, had produced ſuch diſorder and perplexity in the Chriſtian church, continued, in this, to create new troubles, and to foment new diviſions. The Mon-

Montaniſts, Valentinians, Marcionites, and the other Gnoſtics, continued ſtill to draw out their forces, notwithſtanding the repeated defeats they had met with; and their *obſtinacy* remained even when their *ſtrength* was gone, as it oftens happens in religious controverſy. ADELPHIUS and AQUILINUS, who were of the Gnoſtic tribe, endeavoured to inſinuate themſelves and their doctrine into the eſteem of the public, at *Rome*, and in other places in *Italy* [*c*]. They were, however, oppoſed not only by the Chriſtians, but alſo by PLOTINUS, the greateſt Platonic philoſopher of this age, who, followed by a numerous train of diſciples, oppoſed theſe two chimerical teachers, and others of the ſame kind, with as much vigour and ſucceſs as the moſt enlightened Chriſtians could have done. The philoſophical opinions which this faction entertained concerning the Supreme Being, the origin of the world, the nature of evil, and ſeveral other ſubjects, were entirely oppoſite to the doctrines of PLATO. Hence the diſciples of JESUS, and the followers of PLOTINUS, joined together their efforts againſt the progreſs of Gnoſticiſm: and there is no doubt but that their united force ſoon deſtroyed the credit and authority of this fantaſtic ſect, and rendered it contemptible in the eſtimation of the wiſe [*d*].

Manes and the Manichæans.

II. While the Chriſtians were ſtruggling with theſe corrupters of the truth, and upon the point of obtaining a complete and deciſive victory, a new enemy, more vehement and odious than the reſt, ſtarted up ſuddenly, and engaged in the conteſt. This was MANES (or MANICHÆUS, as he ſometimes is called by his diſciples), by birth a Perſian; educated among the Magi, and himſelf

[*c*] PORPHYR. *vita Plotini*, cap. xvi. p. 118.

[*d*] PLOTINUS's book againſt the Gnoſtics is extant in his works, *Ennead.* ii. lib. ix. p. 213.

CENT. III. PART II.

one of that number, before he embraced the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. Inſtructed in all thoſe arts and ſciences, which the Perſians, and the other neighbouring nations, held in the higheſt eſteem, he had penetrated into the depths of aſtronomy in the midſt of a rural life; ſtudied the art of healing, and applied himſelf to painting and philoſophy. His genius was vigorous and ſublime, but redundant and ungoverned; and his mind, deſtitute of a proper temperature, ſeemed to border on fanaticiſm and madneſs. He was ſo adventurous as to attempt a coalition of the doctrine of the Magi with the Chriſtian ſyſtem, or rather the explication of the one by the other: and, in order to ſucceed in this audacious enterprize, he affirmed that CHRIST had left the doctrine of ſalvation unfiniſhed and imperfect; and that he was the *comforter*, whom the departing Saviour had promiſed to his diſciples to lead them to all truth. Many were deceived by the eloquence of this enthuſiaſt, by the gravity of his countenance, and the innocence and ſimplicity of his manners; ſo that, in a ſhort time, he formed a ſect not utterly inconſiderable in point of number. He was put to death by VARANES I. king of the Perſians; though hiſtorians are not agreed concerning the cauſe, the time, and the manner, of his execution [*e*].

III. The

☞ [*e*] Some allege, that MANES having undertaken to cure the ſon of the Perſian monarch of a dangerous diſeaſe, by his medicinal art, or his miraculous power, failed in the attempt, precipitated the death of the prince, and thus incurring the indignation of the king his father, was put to a cruel death. This account is ſcarcely probable, as it is mentioned by none of the Oriental writers cited by D'HERBELOT, and as BAR HEBRÆUS ſpeaks of it in terms which ſhews that it was only an uncertain rumour. The death of MANES is generally attributed to another cauſe by the Oriental writers. They tell us, that MANES (after having been protected, in a ſingular manner, by HORMIZDAS, who ſucceeded SAPOR on the

III. The doctrine of MANES was a motley mixture of the tenets of Chriſtianity with the ancient philoſophy of the Perſians, which he had been inſtructed in during his youth. He combined theſe two ſyſtems; and applied and accommodated to JESUS CHRIST the characters and actions which the Perſians attributed to the god MITHRAS. The principal doctrines of MANES are comprehended in the following ſummary: His doctrine of two principles.

"There are two principles from which all "things proceed; the one is a moſt *pure and ſubtile matter*, called LIGHT; and the other a *groſs "and corrupt ſubſtance*, called DARKNESS. Each "of theſe are ſubject to the dominion of a ſuperintending BEING, whoſe exiſtence is from all "eternity. The BEING, who preſides over the "LIGHT, is called GOD; he that rules the *land "of* DARKNESS, bears the title of HYLE, or DEMON. The RULER OF THE LIGHT is ſupremely "happy; and, in conſequence thereof, benevolent and good: the PRINCE OF DARKNESS is "unhappy in himſelf; and, deſiring to render "others partakers of his miſery, is evil and malignant. Theſe Two BEINGS have produced "an immenſe multitude of creatures, reſembling "themſelves, and diſtributed them through their "reſpective provinces.

IV. "The PRINCE OF DARKNESS knew not, "for a long ſeries of ages, that LIGHT exiſted in Concerning man.

the Perſian throne, but who was not, however, able to defend him, at length, againſt the united hatred of the Chriſtians, the Magi, the Jews, and the Pagans) was ſhut up in a ſtrong caſtle, which HORMIZDAS had erected between *Bagdad* and *Suza*, to ſerve him as a refuge againſt thoſe who perſecuted him on account of his doctrine. They add, that, after the death of HORMIZDAS, VARANES I. his ſucceſſor, firſt protected MANES, but afterwards gave him up to the fury of the Magi, whoſe reſentment againſt him was due to his having adopted the Saducean principles, as ſome ſay; while others attributed it to his having mingled the tenets of the Magi with the doctrines of Chriſtianity.

"the

" the univerſe; and no ſooner perceived it, by
" the means of a war that was kindled in his do-
" minions, than he bent his endeavours towards
" the ſubjecting it to his empire. The RULER OF
" THE LIGHT oppoſed to his efforts an army
" commanded by the *firſt man*, but not with the
" higheſt ſucceſs; for the generals of the PRINCE
" OF DARKNESS ſeized upon a conſiderable por-
" tion of the celeſtial elements, and of the LIGHT
" itſelf, and mingled them in the maſs of corrupt
" matter. The ſecond general of the RULER OF
" THE LIGHT, whoſe name was the *living ſpirit*,
" made war with more ſucceſs againſt the PRINCE
" OF DARKNESS, but could not entirely diſengage
" the pure particles of the celeſtial matter, from
" the corrupt maſs through which they had been
" diſperſed. The PRINCE OF DARKNESS, after
" his defeat, produced the firſt parents of the hu-
" man race. The beings engendered from this
" original ſtock, conſiſt of a body formed out of
" the corrupt matter of the kingdom of DARK-
" NESS, and of two ſouls; one of which is *ſenſi-*
" *tive* and *luſtful*, and owes its exiſtence to the
" *evil principle*; the other *rational* and *immortal*, a
" particle of that divine LIGHT, which was car-
" ried away by the army of DARKNESS, and im-
" merſed into the maſs of malignant matter.

Concerning CHRIST and the Holy Ghoſt.

V. " Mankind being thus formed by the
" PRINCE OF DARKNESS, and thoſe minds, that
" were the productions of the eternal LIGHT, be-
" ing united to their mortal bodies, GOD created
" the earth out of the corrupt maſs of matter, by
" that *living ſpirit*, who had vanquiſhed the
" PRINCE OF DARKNESS. The deſign of this
" creation was to furniſh a dwelling for the hu-
" man race, to deliver, by degrees, the captive
" ſouls from their corporeal priſons, and to ex-
" tract the celeſtial elements from the groſs ſub-
" ſtance in which they were involved. In order

to

" to carry this deſign into execution, GOD pro-
" duced *two beings* of eminent dignity from his
" own ſubſtance, which were to lend their auſpi-
" cious ſuccours to impriſoned ſouls; one of theſe
" ſublime entities was CHRIST; and the other,
" the HOLY GHOST. CHRIST is that glorious
" intelligence, which the Perſians called *Mithras*;
" he is a moſt ſplendid ſubſtance, conſiſting of
" the brightneſs of the eternal Light: ſubſiſting
" in, and by himſelf: endowed with life; en-
" riched with infinite wiſdom; and his reſidence
" is in the ſun. The HOLY GHOST is alſo a lu-
" minous and animated body, diffuſed through-
" out every part of the atmoſphere which ſur-
" rounds this terreſtrial globe. This *genial prin-*
" *ciple* warms and illuminates the minds of men,
" renders alſo the earth fruitful, and draws forth
" gradually from its boſom the latent particles
" of celeſtial fire, which it wafts up on high to
" their primitive ſtation.

Concerning the office of CHRIST.

VI. " After that the SUPREME BEING had, for
" a long time, admoniſhed and exhorted the cap-
" tive ſouls, by the miniſtry of the angels and of
" holy men, raiſed up and appointed for that pur-
" poſe, he ordered CHRIST to leave the ſolar re-
" gions, and to deſcend upon earth, in order to
" accelerate the return of thoſe impriſoned ſpirits
" to their celeſtial country. In obedience to this
" divine command, CHRIST appeared among the
" Jews, clothed with the ſhadowy form of a hu-
" man body, and not with the real ſubſtance.
" During his miniſtry, he taught mortals how to
" diſengage the rational ſoul from the corrupt
" body, to conquer the violence of malignant
" matter, and he demonſtrated his divine miſſion
" by ſtupendous miracles. On the other hand,
" the PRINCE OF DARKNESS uſed every method
" to inflame the Jews againſt this divine meſſen-
" ger, and incited them at length to put him to

" death

CENT. III. PART II.

" death upon an ignominious croſs; which pu-
" niſhment, however, he ſuffered not in reality,
" but only in appearance, and in the opinion of
" men. When CHRIST had fulfilled the purpoſes
" of his miſſion, he returned to his throne in the
" ſun, and appointed a certain number of choſen
" apoſtles to propagate through the world the re-
" ligion he had taught during the courſe of his
" miniſtry. But, before his departure, he pro-
" miſed, that, at a certain period of time, he
" would ſend an apoſtle ſuperior to all others in
Concerning the comforter. " eminence and dignity, whom he called the *pa-*
" *raclete*, or *comforter*, who ſhould add many
" things to the precepts he had delivered, and
" diſpel all the errors under which his ſervants
" laboured concerning divine things. This *com-*
" *forter*, thus expreſsly promiſed by CHRIST, is
" MANES, the Perſian, who, by the order of the
" MOST HIGH, declared to mortals the whole
" doctrine of ſalvation, without exception, and
" without concealing any of its truths, under the
" veil of metaphor, or any other covering.

Concerning the purification of ſouls, and their future condition.

VII. " Thoſe ſouls, who believe JESUS CHRIST
" to be the ſon of GOD, renounce the worſhip of
" the GOD of the JEWS, who is the PRINCE OF
" DARKNESS, obey the laws delivered by CHRIST
" as they are enlarged and illuſtrated by the *com-*
" *forter*, MANES, and combat, with perſevering
" fortitude, the luſts and appetites of a corrupt
" nature, derive from this faith and obedience
" the ineſtimable advantage of being gradually
" purified from the contagion of matter. The
" total purification of ſouls cannot, indeed, be
" accompliſhed during this mortal life. Hence
" it is, that the ſouls of men, after death, muſt
" paſs through two ſtates more of probation and
" trial, by *water* and *fire*, before they can aſcend
" to the regions of LIGHT. They mount, there-
" fore, firſt into the moon, which conſiſts of be-

" nign

" nign and ſalutary *water*; from whence, after a " luſtration of fifteen days, they proceed to the " ſun, whoſe purifying *fire* removes entirely all " their corruption, and effaces all their ſtains. " The bodies, compoſed of malignant matter, " which they have left behind them, return to " their firſt ſtate, and enter into their original " maſs."

Concerning the fate of unpurified ſouls.

VIII. " On the other hand, thoſe ſouls who " have neglected the ſalutary work of their puri- " fication, paſs, after death, into the bodies of " animals, or other natures, where they remain " until they have expiated their guilt, and accom- " pliſhed their probation. Some, on account of " their peculiar obſtinacy and perverſeneſs, paſs " through a ſeverer courſe of trial, being de- " livered over, for a certain time, to the power " of malignant aërial ſpirits, who torment them " in various ways. When the greateſt part of " the captive ſouls are reſtored to liberty, and " to the regions of light, then a devouring fire " ſhall break forth, at the divine command, " from the caverns in which it is at preſent con- " fined, and ſhall deſtroy and conſume the frame " of the world. After this tremendous event, " the PRINCE and *powers of darkneſs* ſhall be " forced to return to their primitive ſeats of " anguiſh and miſery, in which they ſhall dwell " for ever. For, to prevent their ever renewing " this war in the regions of *light*, GOD ſhall ſur- " round the manſions of DARKNESS with an in- " vincible guard, compoſed of thoſe ſouls who " have fallen irrecoverably from the hopes of ſal- " vation, and who, ſet in array, like a military " band, ſhall ſurround thoſe gloomy ſeats of woe, " and hinder any of their wretched inhabitants " from coming forth again to the *light*."

IX. In order to remove the ſtrongeſt obſtacles that lay againſt the belief of this monſtrous ſyſtem,

MANES

CENT. III. PART II.

MANES rejected almoſt all the ſacred books in which Chriſtians look for the ſublime truths of their holy religion. He affirmed, in the firſt place, that the Old Teſtament was not the work of God, but of the Prince of Darkneſs, who was ſubſtituted by the Jews in the place of the true God. He maintained further, that the *Four Goſpels*, which contain the hiſtory of CHRIST, were not written by the apoſtles, or, at leaſt, that they were corrupted and interpolated by deſigning and artful men, and were augmented with Jewiſh fables and fictions. He therefore ſupplied their place by a *goſpel*, which, he ſaid, was dictated to him by God himſelf, and which he diſtinguiſhed by the title of *Erteng*. He rejected alſo the *Acts of the Apoſtles*: and though he acknowledged the *epiſtles* that are attributed to St. PAUL, to be the productions of that divine apoſtle, yet he looked upon them as conſiderably corrupted and falſified in a variety of paſſages. We have not any certain account of the judgment he formed concerning the other books of the New Teſtament.

The opinion of Manes concerning the Old and New Teſtament.

X. The rule of life and manners that MANES preſcribed to his diſciples was moſt extravagantly rigorous and auſtere. He commanded them to mortify and macerate the body, which he looked upon as *intrinſically* evil and *eſſentially* corrupt; to deprive it of all thoſe objects which could contribute either to its conveniency or delight; to extirpate all thoſe deſires that lead to the purſuit of external objects; and to diveſt themſelves of all the paſſions and inſtincts of nature. Such was the unnatural rule of practice which this enormous fanatic preſcribed to his followers; but foreſeeing, at the ſame time, that his ſect could not poſſibly become numerous, if this ſevere manner of living was to be impoſed without diſtinction upon all his adherents, he divided his diſciples into *two* claſſes; the *one* of which comprehended

His rule of life ſeverely ſober.

Diviſion of his diſciples.

the perfect Chriſtians, under the name of the *elect*; and the other, the imperfect and feeble, under the title of *hearers*. The *elect* were obliged to a rigorous and entire abſtinence from fleſh, eggs, milk, fiſh, wine, all intoxicating drink, wedlock, and all amorous gratifications; and to live in a ſtate of the ſharpeſt penury, nouriſhing their ſhrivelled and emaciated bodies with bread, herbs, pulſe, and melons, and depriving themſelves of all the comforts that ariſe from the moderate indulgence of natural paſſions, and alſo from a variety of innocent and agreeable purſuits. The diſcipline, appointed for the *hearers*, was of a milder nature. They were allowed to poſſeſs houſes, lands, and wealth, to feed upon fleſh, to enter into the bonds of conjugal tenderneſs; but this liberty was granted them with many limitations, and under the ſtricteſt conditions of moderation and temperance.

The general aſſembly of the Manicheans was headed by a preſident, who repreſented JESUS CHRIST. There were joined to him *twelve rulers*, or *maſters*, who were deſigned to repreſent the *twelve apoſtles*; and theſe were followed by *ſeventy-two biſhops*, the images of the *ſeventy-two diſciples* of our Lord. Theſe biſhops had *preſbyters* and *deacons* under them, and all the members of theſe religious orders were choſen out of the claſs of the *elect* [*f*].

XI. The ſect of the Hieracites was formed in *Egypt*, towards the concluſion of this century, by HIERAX of *Leontium*, a bookſeller by profeſſion, and diſtinguiſhed eminently by his extenſive learning, and a venerable air of ſanctity and virtue. Some have conſidered this as a branch of the Manichean ſect, but without foundation; ſince, not- The ſect of the Hieracites.

[*f*] See all this amply proved in the work intitled *Commentarii de rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtantinum Magnum.*

with-

CENT. III. PART II.

withſtanding the agreement of MANES and HIERAX in ſome points of doctrine, it is certain that they differed in many reſpects. HIERAX maintained, that the principal object of CHRIST's office and miniſtry was the promulgation of a *new law*, more ſevere and perfect than that of MOSES; and from hence he concluded, that the uſe of fleſh, wine, wedlock, and of other things agreeable to the outward ſenſes, which had been permitted under the Moſaic diſpenſation, was abſolutely prohibited and abrogated by CHRIST. If, indeed, we look attentively into his doctrine, we ſhall find that, like MANES, he did not think that theſe auſtere acts of ſelf-denial, were impoſed by CHRIST indiſcriminately upon all, but on ſuch only, as were ambitious of aſpiring to the higheſt ſummit of virtue. To this capital error he added many others, which were partly the conſequences of this illuſion, and were, in part, derived from other ſources. He excluded, for example, from the kingdom of heaven, children who died before they had arrived to the uſe of reaſon, and that upon the ſuppoſition that God was bound to adminiſter the rewards of futurity, to thoſe only who had fairly finiſhed their victorious conflict with the body and its luſts. He maintained alſo, that MELCHISEDEC, king of *Salem*, who bleſſed ABRAHAM, was the Holy Ghoſt; denied the reſurrection of the body, and caſt a cloud of obſcurity over the ſacred ſcriptures by his allegorical fictions [g].

The Noetian controverſy.

XII. The controverſies relating to the divine Trinity, which took their riſe in the former century, from the introduction of the Grecian philoſophy into the Chriſtian church, were now ſpreading with conſiderable vigour, and producing various methods of explaining that inexplicable

[g] EPIPHAN. *Hæreſ.* lxvii. *Hieracitarum*, p. 710, &c.

doctrine.

doctrine. One of the firſt who engaged in this idle and perilous attempt of explaining what every mortal muſt acknowledge to be incomprehenſible, was NOETUS of *Smyrna*, an obſcure man, and of mean abilities. He affirmed, that the Supreme God, whom he called the *Father*, and conſidered as abſolutely indiviſible, united himſelf to the man CHRIST, whom he called the *Son*, and was born, and crucified with him. From this opinion, NOETUS and his followers were diſtinguiſhed by the title of Patripaſſians, *i. e.* perſons who believe that the Supreme Father of the univerſe, and not any other divine perſon, had expiated the guilt of the human race. And, indeed, this appellation belongs to them juſtly, if the accounts which ancient writers give us of their opinions be accurate and impartial [*b*].

XIII. About the middle of this century aroſe SABELLIUS, an African biſhop or preſbyter, who, in *Pentapolis*, a province of *Cyrenaica*, and in *Ptolemais*, or *Barce*, its principal city, explained, in a manner very little different from that of NOETUS, the doctrine of ſcripture concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. This dogmatiſt had a conſiderable number of followers, who adhered to him, notwithſtanding that his opinions were refuted by DIONYSIUS, biſhop of *Alexandria*. His ſentiments were, in ſome reſpects, different from thoſe of NOETUS; the latter was of opinion, that the *perſon* of the Father had aſſumed the human nature of CHRIST; whereas SABELLIUS maintained, that a certain *energy* only, proceeding from the Supreme Parent, or a certain portion of Sabellius.

[*b*] See the *Diſcourſe of* HIPPOLYTUS *againſt the Hereſy of* NOETUS, in the ſecond volume of his works, publiſhed by FABRICIUS. As alſo EPIPHAN. *Hæreſ.* lvii. tom. i. p. 479. THEODORET. *Hæret. Fabul.* lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 227. tom. 4. opp.

CENT. III. PART II.

the divine nature, was united to the Son of God, the man JESUS; and he conſidered, in the ſame manner, the *Holy Ghoſt*, as a portion of the everlaſting Father [*i*]. From hence it appears, that the Sabellians, though they might with juſtice be called Patripaſſians, were yet called ſo, by the ancients, in a different ſenſe from that in which this name was given to the Noetians.

Beryllus.

XIV. At this ſame period, BERYLLUS an Arabian, biſhop of *Bozrah*, and a man of eminent piety and learning, taught that CHRIST, before his birth, had no proper ſubſiſtence, nor any other divinity, than that of the Father; which opinion, when conſidered with attention, amounts to this: that CHRIST did not exiſt before MARY, but that a *ſpirit* iſſuing from God himſelf, and therefore ſuperior to all human ſouls, as being a portion of the divine nature, was united to him, at the time of his birth. BERYLLUS, however, was refuted by ORIGEN, with ſuch a victorious power of argument and zeal, that he yielded up the cauſe, and returned into the boſom of the church [*k*].

Paul of Samoſata.

XV. PAUL of *Samoſata*, biſhop of *Antioch*, and alſo a magiſtrate or civil judge, was very different from the pious and candid BERYLLUS, both in point of morals and doctrine. He was a vain and

[*i*] Almoſt all the hiſtorians, who give accounts of the ancient hereſies, have made particular mention of SABELLIUS. Among others, ſee EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. vi. p. 252. ATHANAS. *Libro de ſententia Dionyſii.* All the paſſages of the ancient authors, relating to SABELLIUS, are carefully collected by the learned CHRISTOPHER WORMIUS, in his *Hiſtoria Sabelliana*, printed in 8vo, at *Francfort* and *Leipſick*, 1696.

[*k*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xx. p. 222. cap. xxxiii. p. 231. HIERONYM. *Catalog. Scriptor. Eccleſ.* cap. lx. p. 137. SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. vii. p. 174; and among the moderns, LE CLERC, *Ars Critica*, vol. i. part II. § 1. cap. xiv. p. 293. CHAUFFEPIED, *Nouveau Diction. Hiſt. Crit.* tom. i. p. 268.

arrogant man, whom riches had rendered inſolent and ſelf-ſufficient [*l*]. He introduced much confuſion and trouble into the eaſtern churches, by his new explication of the doctrine of the goſpel concerning the nature of GOD and CHRIST, and left behind him a ſect, that aſſumed the title of Paulians, or Paulianiſts. As far as we can judge of his doctrine, by the accounts of it that have been tranſmitted to us, it ſeems to have amounted to this: "That the *Son* and the *Holy* "*Ghoſt* exiſt in *God* in the ſame manner as the "faculties of *reaſon* and *activity* do in man: that "CHRIST was born a mere man; but that the "*reaſon* or *wiſdom* of the Father deſcended into "him, and by him wrought miracles upon earth, "and inſtructed the nations: and finally, that, "on account of this union of the *divine word* with "the *man* JESUS, CHRIST might, though improperly, be called *God*."

Such were the real ſentiments of PAUL. He involved them, however, in ſuch deep obſcurity, by the ambiguous forms of ſpeech he made uſe of to explain and defend them, that, after ſeveral meetings of the councils held to examine his errors, they could not convict him of hereſy. At length, indeed, a council was aſſembled, in the year 269, in which MALCHION, the rhetorician, drew him forth from his obſcurity, detected his evaſions, and expoſed him in his true colours; in conſequence of which he was degraded from the epiſcopal order [*m*].

Abſurdities of ſome Arabian philoſophers.

XVI. It was not only in the point now mentioned, that the doctrine of the goſpel ſuffered, at this time, from the erroneous fancies of wrong-headed doctors. For there ſprung up now, in

[*l*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. xxx. p. 279.

[*m*] *Epiſtol. Concil. Antioch.* ad *Paulum in Bibliotheca Patrum.* tom. xi. p. 302. *Dionyſii Alex. Ep. ad Paulum*, ib. p. 273. *Decem Pauli Samoſateni Quæſtiones*, ib. p. 278.

CENT. III. PART II.

*Arabia*, a certain ſort of minute philoſophers, the diſciples of a maſter, whoſe obſcurity has concealed him from the knowledge of after-ages, who denied the immortality of the ſoul, believed that it periſhed with the body, but maintained, at the ſame time, that it was to be again recalled to life with the body, by the power of God. The philoſophers, who held this opinion, were called Arabians from their country. ORIGEN was called from *Egypt*, to make head againſt this riſing ſect, and diſputed againſt them, in a full council, with ſuch remarkable ſucceſs that they abandoned their erroneous ſentiments, and returned to the received doctrine of the church.

The troubles excited in the church by the Novatians.

XVII. Among the ſects that aroſe in this century, we place that of the Novatians the laſt. This ſect cannot be charged with having corrupted the doctrine of Chriſtianity by their opinions; their crime was, that by the unreaſonable ſeverity of their diſcipline, they gave occaſion to the moſt deplorable diviſions, and made an unhappy rent in the church. NOVATIAN, a preſbyter of the church of *Rome*, a man alſo of uncommon learning and eloquence, but of an auſtere and rigid character, entertained the moſt unfavourable ſentiments of thoſe who had been ſeparated from the communion of the church. He indulged his inclination to ſeverity ſo far, as to deny that ſuch as had fallen into the commiſſion of grievous tranſgreſſions, eſpecially thoſe who had apoſtatized from the faith, under the perſecution ſet on foot by DECIUS, were to be again received into the boſom of the church. The greateſt part of the preſbyters were of a different opinion in this matter, eſpecially CORNELIUS, whoſe credit and influence were raiſed to the higheſt pitch by the eſteem and admiration which his eminent virtues ſo naturally excited. Hence it happened, that when a biſhop was to be choſen, in the year 250,

to

to ſucceed FABIANUS in the ſee of *Rome*, NOVATIAN oppoſed the election of CORNELIUS, with the greateſt activity and bitterneſs. His oppoſition, however, was in vain, for CORNELIUS was choſen to that eminent office of which his diſtinguiſhed merit rendered him ſo highly worthy. NOVATIAN, upon this, ſeparated himſelf from the juriſdiction of CORNELIUS, who, in his turn, called a council at *Rome*, in the year 251, and cut off NOVATIAN and his partiſans from the communion of the church. This turbulent man, being thus excommunicated, erected a new ſociety, of which he was the firſt biſhop; and which, on account of the ſeverity of its diſcipline, was followed by many, and flouriſhed, until the fifth century, in the greateſt part of thoſe provinces which had received the goſpel. The chief perſon who aſſiſted NOVATIAN in this enterprize, was NOVATUS, a Carthaginian preſbyter, a man of no principles, who, during the heat of this controverſy, had come from *Carthage* to *Rome*, to eſcape the reſentment and excommunication of CYPRIAN, his biſhop, with whom he was highly at variance.

The ſeverity of the Novatians againſt the lapſed.

XVIII. There was no difference, in point of doctrine, between the Novatians and other Chriſtians. What peculiarly diſtinguiſhed them was, their refuſing to re-admit to the communion of the church, thoſe who, after baptiſm, had fallen into the commiſſion of heinous crimes, though they did not pretend, that even ſuch were excluded from all poſſibility or hopes of ſalvation. They conſidered the Chriſtian church as a ſociety where virtue and innocence reigned univerſally, and none of whoſe members, from their entrance into it, had defiled themſelves with any enormous crime; and, of conſequence, they looked upon every ſociety, which re-admitted heinous offenders to its communion, as unworthy of the title

CENT. III. PART II.

of a true Chriſtian church. It was from hence alſo, that they aſſumed the title of *Cathari*, i. e. the *pure*; and, what ſhewed ſtill a more extravagant degree of vanity and arrogance, they obliged ſuch as came over to them from the general body of Chriſtians, to ſubmit to be baptiſed a ſecond time, as a neceſſary preparation for entering into their ſociety. For ſuch deep root had their favourite opinion concerning the irrevocable rejection of heinous offenders taken in their minds, and ſo great was its influence upon the ſentiments they entertained of other Chriſtian ſocieties, that they conſidered the baptiſm adminiſtered in thoſe churches, which received the lapſed to their communion, even after the moſt ſincere and undoubted repentance, as abſolutely diveſted of the power of imparting the remiſſion of ſins [*n*].

[*n*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xliii. p. 242. CYPRIANUS *variis Epiſtolis*, xlix. lii. &c. ALBASPINÆUS, *Obſervat. Eccleſ.* lib. ii. cap. xx, xxi. Jos. AUG. ORSI, *De criminum capital. inter veteres Chriſtianos abſolutione*, p. 254. KENCKEL, *De hæreſi Novatiana.*

AN

# ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

## BOOK THE SECOND.

CONTAINING THE

## STATE of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH

From the TIME of

## CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

TO

## CHARLEMAGNE.

# THE FOURTH CENTURY.

## PART I.

### The External HISTORY of the CHURCH.

### CHAPTER I.

*Concerning the proſperous and calamitous events which happened to the church during this century.*



I. THAT I may not ſeparate facts, which are intimately connected with each other, I have judged it expedient to combine, in the ſame chapter, the proſperous and calamitous events that happened to the church during this century, inſtead of treating them ſeparately, as I have hitherto done. This combination, which preſents things in their natural relations, as cauſes or effects, is, undoubtedly, the principal circumſtance that renders hiſtory truly intereſting. In following, however, this plan, the order of time ſhall alſo be obſerved with as much accuracy as this intereſting combination of events will admit of.

The church enjoys peace at the entrance of this century.

In the beginning of this century, the Roman empire was under the dominion of four chiefs, of whom two, DIOCLETIAN and MAXIMIAN HERCULEUS, were of ſuperior dignity, and were diſtinguiſhed each by the title of AUGUSTUS; while

CENT. IV. PART I.

while the other two, *viz.* CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS and MAXIMINUS GALERIUS, were in a certain degree of ſubordination to the former, and were honoured with the appellation of CÆSARS. Under theſe four emperors, the church enjoyed an agreeable calm [*a*]. DIOCLETIAN, though much addicted to ſuperſtition, did not, however, entertain any averſion to the Chriſtians: and CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS, who, following the dictates of right reaſon alone in the worſhip of the deity, had abandoned the abſurdities of polytheiſm, treated them with condeſcenſion and benevolence. This alarmed the Pagan prieſts, whoſe intereſts were ſo cloſely connected with the continuance of the ancient ſuperſtitions, and who apprehended, not without reaſon, that, to their great detriment, the Chriſtian religion would become daily more univerſal and triumphant throughout the empire. Under theſe anxious fears of the downfal of their authority, they addreſſed themſelves to DIOCLETIAN, whom they knew to be of a timorous and credulous diſpoſition, and, by fictitious oracles and other ſuch perfidious ſtratagems, endeavoured to engage him to perſecute the Chriſtians [*b*].

The perſecution under Diocletian.

II. DIOCLETIAN, however, ſtood, for ſome time, unmoved by the treacherous arts of a ſelfiſh and ſuperſtitious prieſthood, who, when they perceived the ill ſucceſs of their cruel efforts, addreſſed themſelves to MAXIMINUS GALERIUS, one of the CÆSARS, and alſo ſon-in-law to DIOCLETIAN, in order to accompliſh their unrighteous purpoſes. This prince, whoſe groſs ignorance of every thing but military affairs was accompanied with a fierce and ſavage temper,

[*a*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 291, &c.

[*b*] EUSEBIUS, *De vita Conſtantini*, lib. ii. cap. l. p. 467. LACTANTII *Inſtitut. divin.* lib. iv. cap. xxvii. p. 393. Idem, *De mortibus perſequutor*, cap. x. p. 943. edit. Heumann.

was

was a proper inſtrument for executing their deſigns. Set on, therefore, by the malicious inſinuations of the heathen prieſts, the ſuggeſtions of a ſuperſtitious mother, and the ferocity of his own natural diſpoſition, he ſolicited DIOCLETIAN with ſuch indefatigable importunity, and in ſuch an urgent manner, for an edict againſt the Chriſtians, that he, at length, obtained his horrid purpoſe. For in the year 303, when this emperor was at *Nicomedia*, an order was obtained from him to pull down the churches of the Chriſtians, to burn all their books and writings, and to take from them all their civil rights and privileges, and render them incapable of any honours or civil promotion [*c*]. This firſt edict, though rigorous and ſevere, extended not to the lives of the Chriſtians, for DIOCLETIAN was extremely averſe to ſlaughter and bloodſhed; it was, however, deſtructive to many of them, particularly to thoſe who refuſed to deliver the ſacred books into the hands of the magiſtrates [*d*]. Many Chriſtians, therefore, and among them ſeveral biſhops and preſbyters, ſeeing the conſequences of this refuſal, delivered up all the religious books and other ſacred things that were in their poſſeſſion, in order to ſave their lives. This conduct was highly condemned by the moſt ſteady and reſolute Chriſtians, who looked upon this compliance as ſacrilegious, and branded thoſe who were guilty of it with the ignominious appellation of *traditors* [*e*].

[*c*] LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus perſequutor*, c. xi. p. 944. EUSEBIUS, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. viii. cap. ii. p. 293, &c.

[*d*] AUGUSTINUS, *Breviculo collat. cum Donatiſtis*, cap. xv. xvii. p. 387. 390. tom. ix. opp. BALUZII *Miſcellan.* tom. ii. p. 77. 92.

[*e*] OPTATUS MILEVIT. *De Schiſmate Donatiſtar.* lib. i. § xiii. p. 13, &c. edit. Pinian.

III.

CENT. IV. PART I.

The causes and severity of this persecution.

III. Not long after the publication of this first edict against the Christians, a fire broke out, at two different times, in the palace of NICOMEDIA, where GALERIUS lodged with DIOCLETIAN. The Christians were accused, by their enemies, as the authors of this [*f*]; and the credulous DIOCLETIAN, too easily persuaded of the truth of this charge, caused vast numbers of them to suffer at *Nicomedia*, the punishment of incendiaries, and to be tormented in the most inhuman and infamous manner [*g*]. About the same time, there arose certain tumults and seditions in *Armenia* and in *Syria*, which were also attributed to the Christians by their irreconcileable enemies, and dexterously made use of to arm against them the emperor's fury. And accordingly DIOCLETIAN, by a new edict, ordered all the bishops and ministers of the Christian church to be cast into prison. Nor did his inhuman violence end here; for a third edict was soon issued out, by which it was ordered, that all sorts of torments should be employed, and the most insupportable punishments invented to force these venerable captives to renounce their profession by sacrificing to the heathen gods [*h*]; for it was hoped, that, if the bishops and doctors of the church could be brought to yield, their respective flocks would be

☞ [*f*] LACTANTIUS assures us, that GALERIUS caused fire to be privately set to the palace, that he might lay the blame of it upon the Christians, and by that means incense DIOCLETIAN still more against them; in which horrid stratagem he succeeded, for never was any persecution so bloody and inhuman, as that which this credulous emperor now set on foot against them.

[*g*] EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. vi. p. 297. LACTANT. *De mortibus perſequut.* cap. xiv. p. 948. CONSTANTINUS M. *Oratio ad ſanctor. cœtum*, cap. xxv. p. 601.

[*h*] EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. vii. p. 298. Idem, *De martyribus Paleſtinæ.*

easily

eaſily induced to follow their example. An immenſe number of perſons, illuſtriouſly diſtinguiſhed by their piety and learning, became the victims of this cruel ſtratagem throughout the whole Roman empire, *Gaul* excepted, which was under the mild and equitable dominion of CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS [*i*]. Some were puniſhed in ſuch a ſhameful manner, as the rules of decency oblige us to paſs in ſilence; ſome were put to death after having had their conſtancy tried by tedious and inexpreſſible tortures; and ſome were ſent to the mines to draw out the remains of a miſerable life in poverty and bondage.

The affairs of the Chriſtians reduced to a dangerous criſis.

IV. In the ſecond year of this horrible perſecution, the 304th of the Chriſtian æra, a fourth edict was publiſhed by DIOCLETIAN, at the inſtigation of GALERIUS, and the other inveterate enemies of the Chriſtian name. By it the magiſtrates were ordered and commiſſioned to force all Chriſtians, without diſtinction of rank or ſex, to ſacrifice to the gods, and were authorized to employ all ſorts of torments in order to drive them to this act of apoſtaſy [*k*]. The diligence and zeal of the Roman magiſtrates, in the execution of this inhuman edict, had liked to have proved fatal to the Chriſtian cauſe [*l*].

GALERIUS now made no longer a myſtery of the ambitious project he had been revolving in his mind. Finding his ſcheme ripe for execution, he obliged DIOCLETIAN and MAXIMIAN HERCULEUS to reſign the imperial dignity, and declared himſelf emperor of the eaſt; leaving in the weſt CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS, with the ill ſtate of

[*i*] LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus perſequut.* cap. xv. p. 951. EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. viii. cap. xiii. p. 309. cap. xviii. p. 317.

[*k*] EUSEBIUS, *De martyribus Paleſtinæ*, cap. iii. p. 321, &c.

[*l*] LACTANTIUS, *Inſtitut. divin.* lib. v. cap. xi. p. 449.

whoſe

CENT. IV. PART I.

whoſe health he was well acquainted. He choſe colleagues according to his own fancy, and, rejecting the propoſal of DIOCLETIAN, who recommended MAXENTIUS, and CONSTANTINE, the ſon of CONSTANTIUS, to that dignity, his choice fell upon SEVERUS and DAZA, his ſiſter's ſon, to whom he had, a little before, given the name of MAXIMIN [*m*]. This revolution reſtored peace to thoſe Chriſtians, who lived in the weſtern provinces, under the adminiſtration of CONSTANTIUS [*n*]; while thoſe of the eaſt, under the tyranny of GALERIUS, had their ſufferings and calamities dreadfully augmented [*o*].

The tranquillity of the church reſtored, by the acceſſion of Conſtantine to the empire;

V. The divine providence, however, was preparing more ſerene and happy days for the church. In order to this, it confounded the ſchemes of GALERIUS, and brought his counſels to nothing. In the year 306, CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS dying in *Britain*, the army ſaluted with the title of AUGUSTUS, his ſon CONSTANTINE, ſurnamed afterwards the GREAT on account of his illuſtrious exploits, and forced him to accept the purple. This proceeding, which muſt have ſtung the tyrant GALERIUS to the heart, he was, nevertheleſs, obliged to bear with patience, and even to confirm with the outward marks of his approbation. Soon after a civil war broke out, the occaſion of which was as follows: MAXIMIN GALERIUS, inwardly enraged at the election of CONSTANTINE by the ſoldiers, ſent him indeed the purple, but gave him only the title of CÆSAR, and created SEVERUS emperor. MAXENTIUS, the ſon of MAXIMIAN HERCULEUS, and ſon-in-law to GALERIUS, provoked at the preference given to

[*m*] LACTANT. *De mortibus perſequut.* cap. xvii. p. 954. cap. xx. p. 961.

[*n*] EUSEB. *De martyribus Paleſtinæ*, cap. xiii. p. 345.

[*o*] LACTANT. *De mortibus perſequut.* cap. xxi. p. 964.

SEVERUS,

SEVERUS, aſſumed the imperial dignity, and found the leſs difficulty in making good this uſurpation, that the Roman people hoped, by his means, to deliver themſelves from the inſupportable tyranny of GALERIUS. Having cauſed himſelf to be proclaimed emperor, he choſe his father MAXIMIAN for his colleague, who, receiving the purple from the hands of his ſon, was univerſally acknowledged in that character by the ſenate and the people. Amidſt all theſe troubles and commotions CONSTANTINE, beyond all human expectation, made his way to the imperial throne.

The weſtern Chriſtians, thoſe of *Italy* and *Africa* excepted [*p*], enjoyed a tolerable degree of tranquillity and liberty during theſe civil tumults. Thoſe of the eaſt ſeldom continued for any conſiderable time in the ſame ſituation; ſubject to various changes and revolutions; their condition was ſometimes adverſe and ſometimes tolerably eaſy, according to the different ſcenes that were preſented by the fluctuating ſtate of public affairs. At length however MAXIMIN GALERIUS, who had been the author of their heavieſt calamities, being brought to the brink of the grave by a moſt dreadful and lingering diſeaſe [*q*], whoſe complicated horrors no language can expreſs, publiſhed, in the year 311, a ſolemn edict, ordering the perſecution to ceaſe, and reſtoring freedom and repoſe to the Chriſtians, againſt whom he had exerciſed ſuch unheard-of cruelties [*r*].

☞ [*p*] The reaſon of this exception is, that the provinces of *Italy* and *Africa*, though nominally under the government of SEVERUS, were yet in fact ruled by GALERIUS with an iron ſceptre.

☞ [*q*] See a lively deſcription of the diſeaſe of GALERIUS in the *Univerſal Hiſtory*, vol. xv. p. 359. of the *Dublin* edition.

[*r*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. viii. cap. xvi. p. 314. LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus perſequut.* cap. xxxiii. p. 981.

VI.

and by the defeat of Maxentius.

VI. After the death of GALERIUS, his dominions fell into the hands of MAXIMIN and LICINIUS, who divided between them the provinces he had poſſeſſed. At the ſame time, MAXENTIUS, who had uſurped the government of *Africa* and *Italy*, determined to make war upon CONSTANTINE, who was now maſter of *Spain* and the Gauls, and this with the ambitious view of reducing, under his dominion, the whole weſtern empire. CONSTANTINE, appriſed of this deſign, marched with a part of his army into *Italy*, gave battle to MAXENTIUS at a ſmall diſtance from *Rome*, and defeated totally that abominable tyrant, who, in his precipitate flight, fell into the *Tiber*, and was drowned. After this victory, which happened in the year 312, CONSTANTINE, and his colleague LICINIUS, immediately granted to the Chriſtians a full power of living according to their own laws and inſtitutions; which power was ſpecified ſtill more clearly in another edict, drawn up at *Milan*, in the following year [*s*]. MAXIMIN, indeed, who ruled in the eaſt, was preparing new calamities for the Chriſtians, and threatening alſo with deſtruction the weſtern emperors. But his projects were diſconcerted by the victory which LICINIUS gained over his army, and, through diſtraction and deſpair, he ended his life by poiſon, in the year 313.

Different opinions concerning the faith of Conſtantine.

VII. About the ſame time, CONSTANTINE the GREAT, who had hitherto diſcovered no religious principles of any kind, embraced Chriſtianity, in conſequence, as it is ſaid, of a *miraculous croſs*, which appeared to him in the air, as he was marching towards *Rome* to attack MAXENTIUS. But that this extraordinary event was the reaſon of his converſion, is a matter that has never yet been

[*s*] EUSEB. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. x. cap. v. p. 388. LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus perſequut.* cap. xlviii. p. 1007.

been placed in ſuch a light, as to diſpel all doubts and difficulties. For the firſt edict of CONSTANTINE in favour of the Chriſtians, and many other circumſtances that might be here alleged, ſhew, indeed, that he was well diſpoſed to them, and to their worſhip, but are no proof that he looked upon Chriſtianity as the only true religion; which, however, would have been the natural effect of a miraculous converſion. It appears evident, on the contrary, that this emperor conſidered the other religions, and particularly that which was handed down from the ancient Romans, as alſo true and uſeful to mankind; and declared it as his intention and deſire, that they ſhould all be exerciſed and profeſſed in the empire, leaving to each individual the liberty of adhering to that which he thought the beſt. CONSTANTINE, it is true, did not remain always in this ſtate of indifference. In proceſs of time, he acquired more extenſive views of the excellence and importance of the Chriſtian religion, and gradually arrived at an entire perſuaſion of its bearing alone the ſacred marks of celeſtial truth, and of a divine origin. He was convinced of the falſehood and impiety of all other religious inſtitutions; and, acting in conſequence of this conviction, he exhorted earneſtly all his ſubjects to embrace the goſpel; and at length employed all the force of his authority in the abolition of the ancient ſuperſtition. It is not indeed eaſy, nor perhaps poſſible, to fix preciſely the time when the religious ſentiments of CONSTANTINE were ſo far changed, as to render all religions, but that of CHRIST, the objects of his averſion. All that we know, with certainty, concerning this matter is, that this change was firſt publiſhed to the world by the laws and edicts [*t*] which this

[*t*] EUSEB. *De vita Conſtant.* lib. ii. cap. xx. p. 453. cap. xliv. p. 464.

CENT. IV. PART I.

emperor iſſued out in the year 324, when, after the defeat and death of LICINIUS, he reigned, without a colleague, ſole lord of the Roman empire. His deſigns, however, with reſpect to the abolition of the ancient religion of the Romans, and the tolerating no other form of worſhip but the Chriſtian, were only made known towards the latter end of his life, by the edicts he iſſued out for deſtroying the heathen temples and prohibiting ſacrifices [*u*].

Of Conſtantine's ſincerity in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

VIII. The ſincerity of CONSTANTINE's zeal for Chriſtianity can ſcarcely be doubted, unleſs it be maintained, that the outward actions of men are, in no degree, a proof of their inward ſentiments. It muſt, indeed, be confeſſed, that the life and actions of this prince were not ſuch as the Chriſtian religion demands from thoſe who profeſs to believe its ſublime doctrines. It is alſo certain, that, from his converſion to the laſt period of his life, he continued in the ſtate of a *catechumen*, and was not received by baptiſm into the number of the faithful, until a few days before his death, when that ſacred rite was adminiſtered to him at *Nicomedia*, by EUSEBIUS, biſhop of that place [*w*]. But neither of theſe circumſtances are ſufficient to prove, that he was not entirely perſuaded of the divinity of the Chriſtian religion, or that his profeſſion of the goſpel was an act of pure diſſi-

[*u*] See GODOFRED *ad codic. Theodoſian.* tom. vi. part I. p. 290.

[*w*] EUSEBIUS, *De vita Conſtantini*, lib. iv. cap. lxi, lxii. Thoſe who, upon the authority of certain records (whoſe date is modern, and whoſe credit is extremely dubious) affirm, that CONSTANTINE was baptized in the year 324, at *Rome*, by SYLVESTER, the biſhop of that city, are evidently miſtaken. Thoſe, even of the Romiſh church, who are the moſt eminent for their learning and ſagacity, reject this notion. See NORIS, *Hiſt. Donatiſt.* tom. iv. opp. p. 650. THOM. MARIÆ MAMACHII *Origin. et Antiquit. Chriſtian.* tom. ii. p. 232.

mulation.

mulation. For it was a cuſtom with many, in this century, to put off their baptiſm to the laſt hour, that thus immediately after receiving by this rite the remiſſion of their ſins, they might aſcend pure and ſpotleſs to the manſions of life and immortality. Nor are the crimes of CONSTANTINE any proof of the inſincerity of his profeſſion, ſince nothing is more evident, though it be ſtrange and unaccountable, than that many who believe, in the firmeſt manner, the truth and divinity of the goſpel, yet violate its laws by repeated tranſgreſſions, and live in contradiction to their own inward principles. Another queſtion of a different nature might be propoſed here, *viz.* Whether motives of a worldly kind did not contribute, in a certain meaſure, to give Chriſtianity, in the eſteem of CONSTANTINE, a preference to all other religious ſyſtems? It is indeed probable, that this prince perceived the admirable tendency of the Chriſtian doctrine and precepts to promote the ſtability of government, by preſerving the citizens in their obedience to the reigning powers, and in the practice of thoſe virtues that render a ſtate happy. And he muſt naturally have obſerved, how defective the Roman ſuperſtition was in this important point [*x*].

IX.

[*x*] See EUSEBIUS, *De vita Conſtant.* lib. i. cap. xxvii. p. 421. ☞ It has been ſometimes remarked, by the more eminent writers of the Roman hiſtory, that the ſuperſtition of that people, contrary to what Dr. MOSHEIM here obſerves, had a great influence in keeping them in their ſubordination and allegiance. It is more particularly obſerved, that in no other nation the ſolemn obligation of an oath was treated with ſuch reſpect, and fulfilled with ſuch a religious circumſpection, and ſuch an inviolable fidelity. But, notwithſtanding all this, it is certain, that ſuperſtition, if it may be dexterouſly turned to good purpoſes, may be equally employed to bad. The artifice of an augur could have rendered ſuperſtition as uſeful to the infernal deſigns of a TARQUIN and a CATILINE, as to the noble and virtuous

A croſs ſeen by him in the air.

IX. The doubts and difficulties that naturally ariſe in the mind, concerning the *miraculous croſs* that CONSTANTINE ſolemnly declared he had ſeen, about noon, in the air, are many and conſiderable. It is eaſy, indeed, to refute the opinion of thoſe, who look upon this prodigy as a cunning fiction invented by the emperor to animate his troops in the enſuing battle, or who conſider the narration as wholly fabulous [*y*]. The ſentiment alſo of thoſe, who imagine that this pretended croſs was no more than a natural phenomenon in a ſolar halo, is, perhaps, more ingenious, than ſolid and convincing [*z*]. Nor, in the third place, do we think it ſufficiently proved, that the divine power interpoſed here to confirm the wavering faith of CONSTANTINE by a ſtupendous miracle. The only hypotheſis then [*a*], which

purpoſes of a PUBLICOLA or a TRAJAN. But true Chriſtianity can animate or encourage to nothing that is not juſt and good. It tends to ſupport government by the principles of piety and juſtice, and not by the ambiguous flight of birds, and ſuch like deluſions.

[*y*] HORNBECK. *Comment. ad Bullam Urbani*, viii. *de Imagin. cultu*, p. 182. OISELIUS, *Theſaur. Numiſm. Antiq.* p. 463. TOLLIUS, *Preface to the French Tranſlation of* LONGINUS, as alſo his *Adnot. ad* LACTANTIUM *de Mort. Perſequut.* cap. xliv. CHRIST. THOMASIUS, *Obſervat. Hallenſ.* tom. i. p. 380.

[*z*] JO. AND. SCHMIDIUS, *Diſſ. de luna in cruce viſa.* JO. ALB. FABRICIUS, *Diſſ. de cruce à Conſtantino viſa*, in his *Biblioth. Græca*, vol. vi. cap. i. p. 8, &c.

☞ [*a*] This hypotheſis of Dr. MOSHEIM is not more credible than the real appearance of a croſs in the air.—Both events are recorded by the ſame authority. And, if the veracity of CONSTANTINE, or of EUSEBIUS, are queſtioned with reſpect to the appearance of a croſs in the day, they can ſcarcely be confided in with reſpect to the truth of the nocturnal viſion. It is very ſurpriſing to ſee the learned authors of the *Univerſal Hiſtory* adopt, without exception, all the accounts of EUSEBIUS concerning this croſs, which are extremely liable to ſuſpicion; which EUSEBIUS himſelf ſeems to have believed but in part, and for the truth of all which he is careful not to make himſelf anſwerable. (See that author *De vita Conſtant.* lib. ii. cap. ix.)

This whole ſtory is attended with difficulties, which render it, both as a miracle and as a fact, extremely dubious, to ſay

no

which remains, is, that we conſider this famous croſs as a viſion repreſented to the emperor in a dream, with the remarkable inſcription, HAC VINCE, *i. e.* IN THIS CONQUER; and this latter opinion is maintained by authors of conſiderable weight [*aa*].

X. The joy, with which the Chriſtians were elated on account of the favourable edicts of CONSTANTINE and LICINIUS, was ſoon interrupted by

The Chriſtians perſecuted by Licinius.

no more.—It will neceſſarily be aſked, whence it comes to paſs, that the relation of a fact, which is ſaid to have been ſeen by the whole army, is delivered by EUSEBIUS, upon the ſole credit of CONSTANTINE? This is the more unaccountable, that EUSEBIUS lived and converſed with many that muſt have been ſpectators of this event, had it really happened, and whoſe unanimous teſtimony would have prevented the neceſſity of CONSTANTINE's confirming it to him by an oath. The ſole relation of one man, concerning a public appearance, is not ſufficient to give complete conviction; nor does it appear, that this ſtory was generally believed by the Chriſtians, or by others, ſince ſeveral eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, who wrote after EUSEBIUS, particularly RUFFIN and SOZOMEN, make no mention of this appearance of a croſs in the heavens. The nocturnal *viſion* was, it muſt be confeſſed, more generally known and believed. Upon which Dr. LARDNER makes this conjecture, that when CONSTANTINE firſt informed the people of the reaſon that induced him to make uſe of the ſign of the croſs in his army, he alleged nothing but a dream for that purpoſe; but that, in the latter part of his life, when he was acquainted with EUSEBIUS, he added, the other particular, of a *luminous croſs*, ſeen *ſomewhere* by him and his army in the day-time (for the place is not mentioned); and that, the emperor having related this in the moſt ſolemn manner, EUSEBIUS thought himſelf obliged to mention it.

[*aa*] All the writers, who have given any accounts of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, are carefully enumerated by J. A. FABRICIUS, in his *Lux Salut. Evang. toti orbi exor.* cap. xii. p. 260. who alſo mentions, cap. xiii. p. 237. the laws concerning religious matters, which were enacted by this emperor, and digeſted into four parts. For a full account of theſe laws, ſee JAC. GODOFRED. *Adnotat. ad Codic. Theodoſ.* and BALDUINUS, in his *Conſtantin. Magn. ſeu de legibus Conſtantini Eccleſ. et Civilibus*, lib. ii. of which a ſecond edition was publiſhed, at *Hall*, by GUNDLING, in 8vo, in the year 1727.

the war which broke out between theſe two princes. LICINIUS, being defeated in a pitched battle, in the year 314, made a treaty of peace with CONSTANTINE, and obſerved it during the ſpace of nine years. But his turbulent ſpirit rendered him an enemy to repoſe; and his natural violence ſeconded, and ſtill further incenſed, by the ſuggeſtions of the Heathen prieſts, armed him againſt CONSTANTINE, in the year 324, for the ſecond time. During this war, he endeavoured to engage in his cauſe all thoſe who remained attached to the ancient ſuperſtition, that thus he might oppreſs his adverſary with numbers; and, in order to this, he perſecuted the Chriſtians in a cruel manner, and put to death many of their biſhops, after trying them with torments of the moſt barbarous nature [*b*]. But all his enterprizes proved abortive; for, after ſeveral battles fought without ſucceſs, he was reduced to the neceſſity of throwing himſelf at the victor's feet, and imploring his clemency; which, however, he did not long enjoy; for he was ſtrangled, by the orders of CONSTANTINE, in the year 325. After the defeat of LICINIUS, the empire was ruled by

[*b*] EUSEBIUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. x. cap. viii. Id. *De vita Conſtantini*, lib. i. cap. xlix. JULIAN himſelf, whoſe bitter averſion to CONSTANTINE gives a ſingular degree of credibility to his teſtimony in this matter, could not help confeſſing that LICINIUS was an infamous tyrant, and a profligate, abandoned to all ſorts of wickedneſs. See the CÆSARS *of* JULIAN, p. 222. of the French edition, by SPANHEIM. And here I beg leave to make a remark, which has eſcaped the learned, and that is, that AURELIUS VICTOR, in his book *de Cæſaribus*, cap. xli. p. 435. edit. Arntzenii, has mentioned the perſecution under LICINIUS in the following terms: "Licinio ne inſontium quidem ac nobilium philoſophorum ſervili more cruciatus adhibiti modum fecere." The philoſophers, whom LICINIUS is here ſaid to have tormented, were, doubtleſs, the Chriſtians, whom many, through ignorance, looked upon as a philoſophical ſect. This paſſage of AURELIUS has not been touched by the commentators, who are too generally more intent upon the knowledge of words, than of things.

CON-

CONSTANTINE alone until his death, and the Chriſtian cauſe experienced, in its happy progreſs, the effects of his auſpicious adminiſtration. This zealous prince employed all the reſources of his genius, all the authority of his laws, and all the engaging charms of his munificence and liberality, to efface, by degrees, the ſuperſtitions of Paganiſm, and to propagate Chriſtianity in every corner of the Roman empire. He had learned, no doubt, from the diſturbances continually excited by LICINIUS, that neither himſelf nor the empire could enjoy a fixed ſtate of tranquillity and ſafety as long as the ancient ſuperſtitions ſubſiſted; and therefore, from this period, he openly oppoſed the ſacred rites of Paganiſm, as a religion detrimental to the intereſts of the ſtate.

The ſtate of the church under the ſons of Conſtantine the Great.

XI. After the death of CONSTANTINE, which happened in the year 337, his three ſons, CONSTANTINE II., CONSTANTIUS, and CONSTANS, were, in conſequence of his appointment, put in poſſeſſion of the empire, and were all ſaluted as emperors and AUGUSTI by the Roman ſenate. There were yet living two brothers of the late emperor, *viz.* CONSTANTIUS DALMATIUS and JULIUS CONSTANTIUS, and they had ſeveral ſons. Theſe the ſons of CONSTANTINE ordered to be put to death, leſt their ambitious views ſhould excite troubles in the empire [*c*]; and they all fell victims to this barbarous order, except GALLUS and JULIAN, the ſons of JULIUS CONSTANTIUS, the

☞ [*c*] It is more probable, that the principal deſign of this maſſacre was to recover the provinces of *Thrace*, *Macedon*, and *Achaia*, which, in the diviſion of the empire, CONSTANTINE the GREAT had given to young DALMATIUS, ſon to his brother of the ſame name, and *Pontus* and *Cappadocia*, which he had granted to ANNIBALIANUS, the brother of young DALMATIUS. Be that as it will, Dr. MOSHEIM has attributed this maſſacre equally to the three ſons of CONSTANTINE; whereas almoſt all authors agree, that neither young CONSTANTINE, nor CONSTANS, had any hand in it at all.

CENT. IV. PART I.

latter, of whom roſe afterwards to the imperial dignity. The dominions allotted to CONSTANTINE were *Britain*, *Gaul*, and *Spain*; but he did not poſſeſs them long, for, having made himſelf maſter, by force, of ſeveral places belonging to CONSTANS, this occaſioned a war between the two brothers, in the year 340, in which CONSTANTINE loſt his life. CONSTANS, who had received, at firſt, for his portion, *Illyricum*, *Italy*, and *Africa*, added now the dominions of the deceaſed prince to his own, and thus became ſole maſter of all the weſtern provinces. He remained in poſſeſſion of this vaſt territory until the year 350, when he was cruelly aſſaſſinated by the orders of MAGNENTIUS, one of his commanders, who had revolted and declared himſelf emperor. MAGNENTIUS, in his turn, met with the fate he deſerved: tranſported with rage and deſpair at his ill ſucceſs in the war againſt CONSTANTIUS, and apprehending the moſt terrible and ignominious death from the juſt reſentment of the conqueror, he laid violent hands upon himſelf. Thus CONSTANTIUS, who had, before this, poſſeſſed the provinces of *Aſia*, *Syria*, and *Egypt*, became, in the year 353, ſole lord of the Roman empire, which he ruled until the year 361, when he died at *Mopſucrene*, on the borders of *Cilicia*, as he was marching againſt JULIAN. None of theſe three brothers poſſeſſed the ſpirit and genius of their father. They all, indeed, followed his example, in continuing to abrogate and efface the ancient ſuperſtitions of the Romans and other idolatrous nations, and to accelerate the progreſs of the Chriſtian religion throughout the empire. This zeal was, no doubt, laudable; its end was excellent; but, in the means uſed to accompliſh it, there were many things worthy of blame.

XII. This flouriſhing progreſs of the Chriſtian religion was greatly interrupted, and the church reduced

reduced to the brink of deſtruction, when JULIAN, the ſon of JULIUS CONSTANTIUS, and the only remaining branch of the imperial family, was placed at the head of affairs. This active and adventurous prince, after having been declared emperor by the army, in the year 380, in conſequence of his exploits among the Gauls, was, upon the death of CONSTANTIUS, the year following, confirmed in the undivided poſſeſſion of the empire. No event could be leſs favourable to the Chriſtians. For though he had been educated in the principles of Chriſtianity, yet he apoſtatized from that divine religion, and employed all his efforts to reſtore the expiring ſuperſtitions of polytheiſm to their former vigour, credit, and luſtre. This apoſtaſy of JULIAN, from the goſpel of CHRIST to the worſhip of the gods, was owing, partly, to his averſion to the CONSTANTINE family, who had embrued their hands in the blood of his father, brother, and kinſmen; and partly, to the artifices of the Platonic philoſophers, who abuſed his credulity, and flattered his ambition, by fictitious miracles and pompous predictions. It is true, this prince ſeemed averſe to the uſe of violence, in propagating ſuperſtition, and ſuppreſſing the truth; nay, he carried the appearances of moderation and impartiality ſo far, as to allow his ſubjects a full power of judging for themſelves in religious matters, and of worſhiping the deity in the manner they thought the moſt rational. But, under this maſk of moderation, he attacked Chriſtianity with the utmoſt bitterneſs, and, at the ſame time, with the moſt conſummate dexterity. By art and ſtratagem he undermined the church, removing the privileges that were granted to Chriſtians and their ſpiritual rulers; ſhutting up the ſchools in which they taught philoſophy and the liberal arts; encouraging the ſectaries and ſchiſmatics, who brought diſhonour

Julian attempts the deſtruction of Chriſtianity.

CENT. IV. PART I.

diſhonour upon the goſpel by their diviſions; compoſing books againſt the Chriſtians, and uſing a variety of other means to bring the religion of JESUS to ruin and contempt. JULIAN extended his views yet further, and was meditating projects of a ſtill more formidable nature againſt the Chriſtian church, which would have felt, no doubt, the fatal and ruinous effects of his inveterate hatred, if he had returned victorious from the Perſian war, which he entered into immediately after his acceſſion to the empire. But in this war, which was raſhly undertaken and imprudently conducted, he fell by the lance of a Perſian ſoldier, and expired in his tent in the 32d year of his age, having reigned, alone, after the death of CONSTANTIUS, twenty months [*d*].

His character.

XIII. It is to me juſt matter of ſurpriſe to find JULIAN placed, by many learned and judicious writers [*e*], among the greateſt heroes that ſhine forth in the annals of time; nay, exalted above all the princes and legiſlators that have been diſtinguiſhed by the wiſdom of their government. Such writers muſt either be too far blinded by prejudice, to perceive the truth; or, they muſt never have peruſed, with any degree of attention, thoſe works of JULIAN that are ſtill extant; or, if neither of theſe be their caſe, they muſt, at leaſt, be ignorant of that which conſtitutes true greatneſs. The real character of JULIAN has few lines

[*d*] For a full account of this emperor, it will be proper to conſult (beſides TILLEMONT and other common writers) *La vie de Julien, par l'Abbé* BLETTERIE, which is a moſt accurate and elegant production. See alſo, *The life and character of* JULIAN, illuſtrated in ſeven diſſertations, by DES VOEUX. EZECH. SPANHEM. *Præfat. et adnot. ad opp.* JULIANI; and FABRICII, *Lux Evangel. toti orbi exoriens*, cap. xiv. p. 294.

[*e*] MONTESQUIEU, in chap. x. of the xxivth book of his work, intitled, *L'Eſprit des loix*, ſpeaks of JULIAN in the following terms: "Il n'y a point eu après lui de Prince plus digne "de gouverner des hommes."

of that uncommon merit that has been attributed to it; for, if we ſet aſide his genius, of which his works give no very high idea; if we except, moreover, his military courage, his love of letters, and his acquaintance with that vain and fanatical philoſophy, which was known by the name of modern Platoniſm, we ſhall find nothing remaining that is, in any meaſure, worthy of praiſe, or productive of eſteem. Beſides, the qualities now mentioned were, in him, counterbalanced by the moſt opprobrious defects. He was a ſlave to ſuperſtition, than which nothing is a more evident mark of a narrow ſoul, of a mean and abject ſpirit. His thirſt of glory and popular applauſe were exceſſive even to puerility; his credulity and levity ſurpaſs the powers of deſcription: a low cunning, and a profound diſſimulation and duplicity, had acquired, in his mind, the force of predominant habits; and all this was accompanied with a total and perfect ignorance of true philoſophy [*f*]. So that, though, in ſome things, JULIAN may be allowed to have excelled the ſons of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, yet it muſt be granted, on the other hand, that he was, in many reſpects, inferior to CONSTANTINE himſelf, whom, upon all occaſions, he loads with the moſt licentious invectives, and treats with the utmoſt diſdain.

XIV. As JULIAN affected, in general, to appear moderate in religious matters, unwilling to trouble any on account of their faith, or to ſeem averſe to any ſect or party, ſo to the Jews, in particular, he extended ſo far the marks of his indulgence, as to permit them to rebuild the

**The Jews attempt in vain to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem.**

☞ [*f*] Nothing can afford a more evident proof of JULIAN's ignorance of the true philoſophy, than his known attachment to the ſtudy of magic, which Dr. MOSHEIM has omitted in his enumeration of the defects and extravagancies of this prince.

temple

CENT. IV. PART I.

temple of *Jeruſalem*. The Jews ſet about this important work; from which, however, they were obliged to deſiſt, before they had even begun to lay the foundations of the ſacred edifice. For, while they were removing the rubbiſh, formidable balls of fire, iſſuing out of the ground with a dreadful noiſe, diſperſed both the works and the workmen, and repeated earthquakes filled the ſpectators of this aſtoniſhing phenomenon with terror and diſmay. This ſignal event is atteſted in a manner that renders its evidence irreſiſtible [g], though, as uſually happens in caſes of that nature, the Chriſtians have embelliſhed it by augmenting raſhly the number of the miracles that are ſuppoſed to have been wrought upon that occaſion. The cauſes of this phenomenon may furniſh matter of diſpute; and learned men have, in effect, been divided upon that point. All, however, who conſider the matter with attention and impartiality, will perceive the ſtrongeſt reaſons for embracing the opinion of thoſe who attribute this event to the almighty interpoſition of the Supreme Being; nor do the arguments offered, by ſome, to prove it the effect of natural cauſes, or thoſe alleged by others to perſuade us that it was the reſult of artifice and impoſture, contain any thing that may not be refuted with the utmoſt facility [b].

[g] See Jo. ALB. FABRICII *Lux Evang. toti orbi exoriens*, p. 124. where all the teſtimonies of this remarkable event are carefully aſſembled; ſee alſo MOYLE's *Poſthumous Works*, p. 101, &c.

[b] The truth of this miracle is denied by the famous BASNAGE, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, tom. iv. p. 1257. againſt whom CUPER has taken the affirmative, and defended it in his *Letters* publiſhed by BAYER, p. 400. A moſt ingenious diſcourſe has been publiſhed lately, in defence of this miracle, by the learned Dr. WARBURTON, under the title of *Julian*; or, *A diſcourſe concerning the earthquake and fiery eruption*, &c. in which the objections of BASNAGE are particularly examined and refuted.

XV.

XV. Upon the death of JULIAN, the ſuffrages of the army were united in favour of JOVIAN, who, accordingly, ſucceeded him in the imperial dignity. After a reign of ſeven months, JOVIAN died in the year 364, and, therefore, had not time to execute any thing of importance [*i*]. The emperors who ſucceeded him, in this century, were VALENTINIAN I., VALENS, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN II., and HONORIUS, who profeſſed Chriſtianity, promoted its progreſs, and endeavoured, though not all with equal zeal, to root out entirely the Gentile ſuperſtitions. In this they were all ſurpaſſed by the laſt of the emperors who reigned in this century, *viz.* THEODOSIUS the GREAT, who came to the empire in the year 379, and died in the year 395. As long as this prince lived, he exerted himſelf, in the moſt vigorous and effectual manner, in the extirpation of the Pagan ſuperſtitions throughout all the provinces, and enacted ſevere laws and penalties againſt ſuch as adhered to them. His ſons ARCADIUS and HONORIUS purſued with zeal, and not without ſucceſs, the ſame end; ſo that, towards the concluſion of this century, the Gentile religions declined apace, and had alſo no proſpect left of recovering their primitive authority and ſplendor.

The ſtate of the church after the death of Julian.

XVI. It is true, that, notwithſtanding all this zeal and ſeverity of the Chriſtian emperors, there ſtill remained in ſeveral places, and eſpecially in the remoter provinces, temples and religious rites conſecrated to the ſervice of the Pagan deities. And, indeed, when we look attentively into the matter, we ſhall find, that the execution of thoſe

Remains of paganiſm.

[*i*] See BLETTERIE, *Vie de Jovien*, vol. ii. publiſhed at *Paris* in 1748, in which the *Life of Julian*, by the ſame author, is further illuſtrated, and ſome productions of that emperor tranſlated into French.

rigorous laws, that were enacted againſt the worſhippers of the gods, was rather levelled at the multitude, than at perſons of eminence and diſtinction. For it appears, that, both during the reign, and after the death of THEODOSIUS, many of the moſt honourable and important poſts were filled by perſons, whoſe averſion to Chriſtianity, and whoſe attachment to Paganiſm, were ſufficiently known. The example of LIBANIUS alone is an evident proof of this; ſince, notwithſtanding his avowed and open enmity to the Chriſtians, he was raiſed by THEODOSIUS himſelf to the high dignity of prefect, or chief, of the Pretorian guards. It is extremely probable, therefore, that in the execution of the ſevere laws enacted againſt the Pagans, there was an exception made in favour of philoſophers, rhetoricians, and military leaders, on account of the important ſervices which they were ſuppoſed to render to the ſtate, and that they of conſequence enjoyed more liberty in religious matters, than the inferior orders of men.

The efforts of the philoſophers againſt Chriſtianity.

XVII. This peculiar regard ſhewn to the philoſophers and rhetoricians will, no doubt, appear ſurpriſing when it is conſidered, that all the force of their genius, and all the reſources of their art were employed againſt Chriſtianity; and that thoſe very ſages, whoſe ſchools were reputed of ſuch utility to the ſtate, were the very perſons who oppoſed the progreſs of the truth with the greateſt vehemence and contention of mind. HIEROCLES, the great ornament of the Platonic ſchool, wrote, in the beginning of this century, two books againſt the Chriſtians, in which he went ſo far as to draw a parallel between JESUS CHRIST and APOLLONIUS TYANAEUS. This preſumption was chaſtiſed with great ſpirit, by EUSEBIUS, in a particular treatiſe written expreſsly in anſwer to HIEROCLES. LACTANTIUS takes notice

tice of another philoſopher, who compoſed three books to detect the pretended errors of the Chriſtians [k]; but does not mention his name. After the time of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, beſides the long and laborious work which JULIAN wrote againſt the followers of CHRIST, HIMERIUS [l] and LIBANIUS, in their public harangues, and EUNAPIUS, in his lives of the philoſophers, exhauſted all their rage and bitterneſs in their efforts to defame the Chriſtian religion; while the calumnies, that abounded in the diſcourſes of the one, and the writings of the other, paſſed unpuniſhed.

The prejudice which the Chriſtian cauſe received from the philoſophers.

XVIII. The prejudice, which the Chriſtian cauſe received, in this century, from the ſtratagems of theſe philoſophers and rhetoricians, who were elated with a preſumptuous notion of their knowledge, and prepoſſeſſed with a bitter averſion to the goſpel, was certainly very conſiderable. Many examples concur to prove this; and, particularly, that of JULIAN, who was ſeduced by the artifices of theſe corrupt ſophiſts. The effects of their diſputes and declamations were not, indeed, the ſame upon all; ſome, who aſſumed the appearance of ſuperior wiſdom, and who, either from moderation or indifference, profeſſed to purſue a middle way in theſe religious controverſies, compoſed matters in the following manner: They gave ſo far their ear to the interpretations and diſcourſes of the rhetoricians, as to form to themſelves a middle kind of religion, between the ancient theology and the new doctrine that was now propagated in the empire; and they perſuaded themſelves, that the ſame truths which CHRIST taught, had been, for a long time, concealed, by the prieſts of the

[k] *Inſtitut. Divin.* lib. v. cap. ii. p. 535.

[l] See PHOTIUS *Biblioth. Cod.* cap. lxv. p. 355.

gods,

CENT. IV. PART I.

gods, under the veil of ceremonies, fables, and allegorical repreſentations [*m*]. Of this number were AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, a man of ſingular merit; THEMISTIUS, an orator highly diſtinguiſhed by his uncommon eloquence and the eminence of his ſtation; CHALCIDIUS, a philoſopher, and others, who were all of opinion, that the two religions, when properly interpreted and underſtood, agreed perfectly well in the main points; and that, therefore, neither the religion of CHRIST, nor that of the gods, were to be treated with contempt.

☞ [*m*] This notion, abſurd as it is, has been revived, in the moſt extravagant manner, in a work publiſhed at *Harderwyk*, in *Guelderland*, in the year 1757, by Mr. STRUCHTMEYER, profeſſor of eloquence and languages in that univerſity. In this work, which bears the title of the SYMBOLICAL HERCULES, the learned and wrong-headed author maintains (as he had alſo done in a preceding work, intitled, *An Explication of the Pagan Theology*), that all the doctrines of Chriſtianity were emblematically repreſented in the Heathen mythology; and not only ſo, but that the inventors of that mythology knew that the Son of God was to deſcend upon earth; believed in CHRIST as the only fountain of ſalvation; were perſuaded of his future incarnation, death, and reſurrection; and had acquired all this knowledge and faith by the peruſal of a Bible much older than either MOSES or ABRAHAM, &c. The Pagan doctors, thus inſtructed (according to Mr. STRUCHTMEYER) in the myſteries of Chriſtianity, taught theſe truths under the veil of *emblems*, *types*, and *figures*. JUPITER, repreſented the *true* GOD; JUNO, who was obſtinate and ungovernable, was the emblem of the *ancient* ISRAEL; the chaſte DIANA, was a type of the *Chriſtian church*; HERCULES, was the figure or fore-runner of CHRIST; AMPHITRYON, was JOSEPH; the two *Serpents*, that HERCULES killed in his cradle, were the Phariſees and Saducees, &c. Such are the principal lines of Mr. STRUCHTMEYER's ſyſtem, which ſhews the ſad havock that a warm imagination, undirected by a juſt and ſolid jndgment, makes in religion. It is, however, honourable perhaps to the preſent age, that a ſyſtem, from which AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS and other philoſophers of old derived applauſe, will be generally looked upon, at preſent, as intitling its reſtorer to a place in *Bedlam*.

XIX.

Progreſs of Chriſtianity.

XIX. The zeal and diligence with which CONSTANTINE and his ſucceſſors exerted themſelves in the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and in extending the limits of the church, prevent our ſurpriſe at the number of barbarous and uncivilized nations, which received the goſpel [*n*]. It appears highly probable, from many circumſtances, that both the *Greater* and the *Leſſer Armenia* were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, not long after the firſt riſe of Chriſtianity. The Armenian church was not, however, completely formed and eſtabliſhed before this century; in the commencement of which, GREGORY, the ſon of ANAX, who is commonly called the *Enlightner*, from his having diſpelled the darkneſs of the Armenian ſuperſtitions, converted to Chriſtianity TIRIDATES, king of *Armenia*, and all the nobles of his court. In conſequence of this, GREGORY was conſecrated biſhop of the Armenians, by LEONTIUS biſhop of *Cappadocia*, and his miniſtry was crowned with ſuch ſucceſs, that the whole province was ſoon converted to the Chriſtian faith [*o*].

Among the Abaſſines or Ethiopians.

XX. Towards the middle of this century, a certain perſon, named FRUMENTIUS, came from *Egypt* to *Abaſſia*, or *Æthiopia*, whoſe inhabitants derived the name of Axumitæ from Axuma, the capital city of that country. He made known among this people the goſpel of CHRIST, and adminiſtered the ſacrament of baptiſm to their king, and to ſeveral perſons of the firſt diſtinction at his court. As FRUMENTIUS was returning from

[*n*] GAUDENTII *vita Philaſtrii*, § 3. PHILASTRIUS, *De hæreſ. Præf.* p. 5. edit. Fabricii. SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. xix. GEORGIUS CEDRENUS, *Chronograph.* p. 234. edit. Pariſ.

[*o*] *Narratio de rebus Armeniæ in* FRANC. COMDEFISII *Auctario Biblioth. Patrum Græcor.* tom. ii. p. 287. MICH. LEQUIEN, *Oriens Chriſtianus*, tom. i. p. 419. 1356. Jo. JOACH. SCHRODERI *Theſaur. linguæ Armenicæ*, p. 149.

CENT. IV. PART I.

hence into *Egypt*, he received conſecration, as the firſt biſhop of the Axumitæ, or Ethiopians, from ATHANASIUS. And this is the reaſon why the Ethiopian church has, even to our times, been conſidered as the daughter of the Alexandrian, from which it alſo receives its biſhop [*p*].

And Georgians.

The light of the goſpel was introduced into *Iberia*, a province of *Aſia*, now called *Georgia*, in the following manner: A certain woman was carried into that country as a captive, during the reign of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, and by the grandeur of her miracles, and the remarkable ſanctity of her life and manners, ſhe made ſuch an impreſſion upon the king and queen, that they abandoned their falſe gods, embraced the faith of the goſpel, and ſent to *Conſtantinople*, for proper perſons to give them and their people a more ſatisfactory and complete knowledge of the Chriſtian religion [*q*].

And Goths.

XXI. A conſiderable part of the Goths, who had inhabited *Thrace*, *Mœſia*, and *Dacia*, had received the knowledge, and embraced the doctrines, of Chriſtianity before this century; and THEOPHILUS, their biſhop, was preſent at the council of *Nice*. CONSTANTINE the GREAT, after having vanquiſhed them and the Sarmatians, engaged great numbers of them to become Chriſtians [*r*]. But ſtill a large body continued in their attachment to their ancient ſuperſtition, until the time of the emperor VALENS. This

[*p*] ATHANASIUS, *Apolog. ad Conſtantium*, tom. i. oppar. II. p. 315. edit. Benedict. SOCRATES et SOZOMEN. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* book i. ch. xix. of the former, book ii. ch. xxiv. of the latter. THEODORET. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. xxiii. p. 54. LUDOLF. *Comment. ad Hiſt. Æthiopic.* p. 281. HIER. LOBO, *Voyage d'Abyſſinie*, tom. ii. p. 13. JUSTUS FONTANINUS, *Hiſt. Litter. Aquileiæ*, p. 174.

[*q*] RUFINUS, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. x. SOZOMEN, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. ii. cap. v. LEQUIEN, *Oriens Chriſ.* tom. i. p. 1333.

[*r*] SOCRAT. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. xviii.

prince permitted them, indeed, to pass the *Danube*, and to inhabit *Dacia*, *Mœsia*, and *Thrace*; but it was on condition, that they should live in subjection to the Roman laws, and embrace the profession of Christianity [*s*], which condition was accepted by their king FRITIGERN. The celebrated ULPHILUS, bishop of those Goths, who dwelt in *Mœsia*, lived in this century, and distinguished himself much by his genius and piety. Among other eminent services which he rendered to his country, he invented a set of letters for their peculiar use, and translated the scriptures into the Gothic language [*t*].

XXII. There remained still, in the European provinces, an incredible number of persons who adhered to the worship of the gods; and though the Christian bishops continued their pious efforts to gain them over to the gospel, yet the success was, by no means, proportionable to their diligence and zeal, and the work of conversion went on but slowly. In *Gaul*, the great and venerable MARTIN, bishop of *Tours*, set about this important work with tolerable success. For, in his various voyages among the Gauls, he converted many, every where, by the energy of his discourses and by the power of his miracles, if we may rely upon the testimony of SULPITIUS SEVERUS in this matter. He destroyed also the temples of the gods, pulled down their statues [*u*],

Among the Gauls.

[*s*] SOCRAT. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxxiii. LEQUIEN, *Oriens Christ.* tom. i. p. 1240. ERIC. BENZELIUS, *Præf. ad Quatuor Evangelia Gothica, quæ* ULPHILÆ *tribuuntur*, cap. v. p. xviii. published, at Oxford, in the year 1750, in 4to.

[*t*] Jo. JAC. MASCOVII *Historia Germanorum*, tom. i. p. 317. tom. ii. *not.* p. 49. *Acta SS. Martii*, tom. iii. p. 619. BENZELIUS, *loc. citat.* cap. viii. p. xxx.

[*u*] See SULPIT. SEVERUS, *Dial.* i. *De Vita Martini*, cap. xiii. p. 20. cap. xv. p. 22. cap. xvii. p. 23. *Dial.* ii. p. 106. edit. HIER. a PRATO, Verona, 1741.

CENT. IV. PART I.

and on all theſe accounts merited the high and honourable title of Apoſtle of the Gauls.

The cauſes of ſo many changes.

XXIII. There is no doubt, but that the victories of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, the fear of puniſhment, and the deſire of pleaſing this mighty conqueror, and his imperial ſucceſſors, were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular perſons, to embrace Chriſtianity. None, however, that have any acquaintance with the tranſactions of this period of time, will attribute the whole progreſs of Chriſtianity to theſe cauſes. For it is undeniably manifeſt, that the indefatigable zeal of the biſhops, and other pious men, the innocence and ſanctity which ſhone forth with ſuch luſtre in the lives of many Chriſtians, the tranſlations that were publiſhed of the ſacred writings, and the intrinſic beauty and excellence of the Chriſtian religion, made as ſtrong and deep impreſſions upon ſome, as worldly views and ſelfiſh conſiderations did upon others.

As to the miracles attributed to ANTONY, PAUL the Hermit, and MARTIN, I give them up without the leaſt difficulty, and join with thoſe who treat theſe pretended prodigies with the contempt they deſerve [*w*]. I am alſo willing to grant, that many events have been raſhly eſteemed miraculous, which were the reſult of the ordinary laws of nature; and alſo that ſeveral pious frauds have been imprudently made uſe of, to give new degrees of weight and dignity to the Chriſtian cauſe. But I cannot, on the other hand, aſſent to the opinions of thoſe who maintain, that, in this century, miracles had entirely

[*w*] HIER. a PRATO, in his Preface to SULPITIUS SEVERUS (p. xiii.) diſputes warmly in favour of the miracles of MARTIN, and alſo of the other prodigies of this century.

ceaſed;

ceaſed; and that, at this period, the Chriſtian church was not favoured with any extraordinary or ſupernatural mark of a divine power engaged in its cauſe [*x*].

Perſecutions in *Perſia*.

XXIV. The Chriſtians, who lived under the Roman government, were not afflicted with any ſevere calamities from the time of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, except thoſe which they ſuffered during the troubles and commotions raiſed by LICINIUS, and under the tranſitory reign of JULIAN. Their tranquillity however was, at different times, diſturbed in ſeveral places. Among others ATHANARIC, king of the Goths, perſecuted, for ſome time, with bitterneſs, that part of the Gothic nation which had embraced Chriſtianity [*y*]. In the remoter provinces, the Pagans often defended their ancient ſuperſtitions by the force of arms, and maſſacred the Chriſtians, who, in the propagation of their religion, were not always ſufficiently attentive, either to the rules of prudence, or the dictates of humanity [*z*]. The Chriſtians, who lived beyond the limits of the Roman empire, had a harder fate. SAPOR II. king of *Perſia*, vented his rage againſt thoſe of his dominions in three dreadful perſecutions. The firſt of theſe happened in the 18th year of the reign of that prince; the ſecond, in the 30th; and the third, in the 31ſt year of the ſame reign. This laſt was the moſt cruel and

[*x*] See EUSEBIUS's book againſt HIEROCLES, ch. iv. p. 431. edit. Olearii; as alſo HENR. DODWELL, *Diſſ.* ii. *in Irenæum*, § 55. p. 195. ☞ See Dr. MIDDLETON's *Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers, which are ſaid to have ſubſiſted in the Chriſtian Church*, &c. in which a very different opinion is maintained. See, however, on the other ſide, the anſwers of CHURCH and DODWELL to MIDDLETON's *Inquiry*.

[*y*] See THEODOR. RUINARTI *Acta martyr. ſincera*, and there *Acta S. Sabæ*, p. 598.

[*z*] See AMBROSIUS, *De officiis*, lib. i. cap. xlii. § 17.

CENT. IV. PART I.

deſtructive of the three: it carried off an incredible number of Chriſtians, and continued during the ſpace of forty years, having commenced in the year 330, and ceaſed only in 370. It was not, however, the religion of the Chriſtians, but the ill-grounded ſuſpicion of their treaſonable deſigns againſt the ſtate, that drew upon them this terrible calamity. For the Magi and the Jews perſuaded the Perſian monarch, that all the Chriſtians were devoted to the intereſts of the Roman emperor, and that SYMEON, archbiſhop of *Seleucia* and *Cteſiphon*, ſent to *Conſtantinople* intelligence of all that paſſed in *Perſia* [a].

[a] See ZOZOMEN. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. ii. cap. i. xiii. There is a particular and expreſs account of this perſecution in the *Bibliothec. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 6. 16. 181. tom. iii. p. 52. with which it will be proper to compare the Preface of the learned ASSEMAN, to his *Acta martyrum oriental. et occidental.* publiſhed, in two volumes in folio, at *Rome* in the year 1748; as this author has publiſhed the *Perſian Martyrology* in Syriac, with a Latin tranſlation, and enriched this valuable work with many excellent obſervations.

# PART II.

## The INTERNAL HISTORY of the CHURCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Which contains the history of learning and philosophy.*



The state of learning.

I. PHILOLOGY, eloquence, poetry, and history, were the branches of science particularly cultivated, at this time, by those, among the Greeks and Latins, who were desirous to make a figure in the learned world. But though several persons of both nations acquired a certain degree of reputation by their literary pursuits, yet they came all far short of the summit of fame. The best poets of this period, such as AUSONIUS, appear insipid, harsh, and inelegant, when compared with the sublime bards of the Augustan age. The rhetoricians, departing now from the noble simplicity and majesty of the ancients, instructed the youth in the fallacious art of pompous declamation; and the greatest part of the historical writers were more set upon embellishing their narrations with vain and tawdry ornaments, than upon rendering them interesting by their order, perspicuity, and truth.

The progress of the Platonic philosophy.

II. Almost all the philosophers of this age were of that sect which we have already distinguished by the title of Modern Platonics. It is not therefore surprising, that we find the principles of Platonism in all the writings of the Christians. The number, however, of these philosophers was not so considerable in the west as in the eastern countries. JAMBLICHUS of *Chalcis* explained, in

CENT. IV. PART II.

*Syria*, the philoſophy of PLATO, or rather propagated his own particular opinions under that reſpectable name. He was an obſcure and credulous man, and his turn of mind was highly ſuperſtitious and chimerical, as his writings abundantly teſtify [*b*]. His ſucceſſors were, ÆDESIUS, MAXIMUS, and others, whoſe follies and puerilities are expoſed, at length, by EUNAPIUS. HYPATIA, a female philoſopher of diſtinguiſhed merit and learning, ISIDORUS, OLYMPIODORUS, SYNESIUS, afterwards a Semi-Chriſtian, with others of inferior reputation, were the principal perſons concerned in propagating this new modification of Platoniſm.

Its fate.

III. As the emperor JULIAN was paſſionately attached to this ſect (which his writings abundantly prove) he employed every method to increaſe its authority and luſtre, and, for that purpoſe, engaged in its cauſe ſeveral men of learning and genius, who vied with each other in exalting its merit and excellence [*c*]. But after his death, a dreadful ſtorm of perſecution aroſe, under the reign of VALENTINIAN, againſt the Platoniſts; many of whom, being accuſed of magical practices, and other heinous crimes, were capitally convicted. During theſe commotions, MAXIMUS, the maſter and favourite of JULIAN, by whoſe perſuaſions this emperor had been en-

☞ [*b*] Dr. MOSHEIM ſpeaks here only of one JAMBLICHUS, though there were three perſons who bore that name. It is not eaſy to determine which of them was the author of thoſe works that have reached our times under the name of JAMBLICHUS; but whoever it was, he does not certainly deſerve ſo mean a character as our learned hiſtorian here gives him.

[*c*] See the learned Baron EZEKIEL SPANHEIM's *Preface to the works of* JULIAN; and that alſo which he has prefixed to his French tranſlation of JULIAN's *Cæſars*, p. 111. and his Annotations to the latter, p. 234; ſee alſo BLETTERIE, *Vie de l'Empereur Julien*, lib. i. p. 26.

gaged to renounce Chriſtianity, and to apply himſelf to the ſtudy of magic, was put to death with ſeveral others [*d*]. It is probable, indeed, that the friendſhip and intimacy that had ſubſiſted between the apoſtate emperor and theſe pretended ſages were greater crimes, in the eye of VALENTINIAN, than either their philoſophical ſyſtem or their magic arts. And hence it happened, that ſuch of the ſect as lived at a diſtance from the court, were not involved in the dangers or calamities of this perſecution.

The ſtate of learning among the Chriſtians.

IV. From the time of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, the Chriſtians applied themſelves with more zeal and diligence to the ſtudy of philoſophy and of the liberal arts, than they had formerly done. The emperors encouraged this taſte for the ſciences, and left no means unemployed to excite and maintain a ſpirit of literary emulation among the profeſſors of Chriſtianity. For this purpoſe, ſchools were eſtabliſhed in many cities. Libraries were alſo erected, and men of learning and genius were nobly recompenſed by the honours and advantages that were attached to the culture of the ſciences and arts [*e*]. All this was indiſpenſably neceſſary to the ſucceſsful execution of the ſcheme that was laid for abrogating, by degrees, the worſhip of the gods. For the ancient religion was maintained, and its credit ſupported, by the erudition and talents which diſtinguiſhed in ſo many places the ſages of paganiſm. And there was juſt reaſon to apprehend that the truth might ſuffer, if the Chriſtian youth,

[*d*] AMMIAN. MARCELLIN. *Hiſtoriarum*, lib. xxix. cap. i. p. 556. edit. Valeſii. BLETTERIE, *Vie de Julien*, p. 30.—155. 159. and *Vie de Jovien*, tom. i. p. 194.

[*e*] See GODOFRED. *ad Codicis Theodoſ. titulos de profeſſoribus et artibus liberalibus*. FRANC. BALDUINUS *in Conſtantino M.* p. 122. HERM. CONRINGII *Diſſert. de ſtudiis Romæ et Conſtantinop.* at the end of his *Antiquitates Academicæ*.

for

CENT. IV. PART II.

for want of proper maſters and inſtructors of their own religion, ſhould have recourſe, for their education, to the ſchools of the Pagan philoſophers and rhetoricians.

Many illiterate Chriſtians.

V. From what has been here ſaid concerning the ſtate of learning among the Chriſtians, we would not have any conclude, that an acquaintance with the ſciences was become univerſal in the church of CHRIST. For, as yet, there was no law enacted, which excluded the ignorant and illiterate from eccleſiaſtical preferments and offices; and it is certain, that the greateſt part, both of the biſhops and preſbyters, were men entirely deſtitute of all learning and education. Beſides, that ſavage and illiterate party, who looked upon all ſorts of erudition, particularly that of a philoſophical kind, as pernicious and even deſtructive to true piety and religion, increaſed both in number and authority. The aſcetics, monks, and hermits, augmented the ſtrength of this barbarous faction; and not only the women, but alſo all who took ſolemn looks, ſordid garments, and a love of ſolitude, for real piety (and in this number we comprehend the generality of mankind) were vehemently prepoſſeſſed in their favour.

## CHAP. II.

*Concerning the government of the church, and the Chriſtian doctors, during this century.*

The form of government in the Chriſtian church.

I. CONSTANTINE the GREAT made no eſſential alterations in the form of government that took place in the Chriſtian church before his time; he only corrected it in ſome particulars, and gave it a greater extent. For, though

though he permitted the church to remain a body-politic diſtinct from that of the ſtate, as it had formerly been, yet he aſſumed to himſelf the ſupreme power over this ſacred body, and the right of modelling and governing it in ſuch a manner, as ſhould be moſt conducive to the public good. This right he enjoyed without any oppoſition, as none of the biſhops preſumed to call his authority in queſtion. The people therefore continued, as uſual, to chuſe freely their biſhops and their teachers. The biſhop governed the church, and managed the eccleſiaſtical affairs of the city or diſtrict, where he preſided, in council with the preſbyters, and with a due regard to the ſuffrages of the whole aſſembly of the people. The provincial biſhops, aſſembled in council, deliberated together concerning thoſe matters that related to the intereſts of the churches of a whole province, as alſo concerning religious controverſies, the forms and rites of divine ſervice, and other things of like moment. To theſe leſſer councils, which were compoſed of the eccleſiaſtical deputies of one or more provinces, were afterwards added *œcumenical councils*, conſiſting of commiſſioners from all the churches in the Chriſtian world, and which, conſequently, repreſented the church univerſal. Theſe were eſtabliſhed by the authority of the emperor, who aſſembled the firſt of theſe univerſal councils at *Nice*. This prince thought it equitable, that queſtions of ſuperior importance, and ſuch as intimately concerned the intereſts of Chriſtianity in general, ſhould be examined and decided in aſſemblies that repreſented the whole body of the Chriſtian church; and in this it is highly probable, that his judgment was directed by that of the biſhops. There were never, indeed, any councils held, which could, with ſtrict propriety, be called *univerſal*; thoſe, however, whoſe laws and

CENT. IV. PART II.

and decrees were approved and admitted by the univerſal church, or the greateſt part of that ſacred body, are commonly called *æcumenical* or *general* councils.

Changes introduced with reſpect to the rights of the ſeveral orders of the church.

II. The rights and privileges of the ſeveral eccleſiaſtical orders were, however, gradually changed and diminiſhed, from the time that the church began to be torn with diviſions, and agitated with thoſe violent diſſenſions and tumults, to which the elections of biſhops, the diverſity of religious opinions, and other things of a like nature, too frequently gave riſe. In theſe religious quarrels, the weaker generally fled to the court for protection and ſuccour; and thereby furniſhed the emperors with a favourable opportunity of ſetting limits to the power of the biſhops, of infringing the liberties of the people, and of modifying, in various ways, the ancient cuſtoms according to their pleaſure. And, indeed, even the biſhops themſelves, whoſe opulence and authority were conſiderably increaſed ſince the reign of CONSTANTINE, began to introduce, gradually, innovations into the forms of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, and to change the ancient government of the church. Their firſt ſtep was an entire excluſion of the people from all part in the adminiſtration of eccleſiaſtical affairs; and afterwards they, by degrees, diveſted even the *preſbyters* of their ancient privileges and their primitive authority, that they might have no importunate proteſters to control their ambition, or oppoſe their proceedings; and, principally, that they might either engroſs to themſelves, or diſtribute, as they thought proper, the poſſeſſions and revenues of the church. Hence it came to paſs, that, at the concluſion of this century, there remained no more than a mere ſhadow of the ancient government of the church. Many of the privileges, which had formerly belonged to the preſbyters

and

and people, were uſurped by the biſhops; and many of the rights, which had been formerly veſted in the univerſal church, were transferred to the emperors, and to ſubordinate officers and magiſtrates.

The eccleſiaſtical government modelled according to the civil.

III. CONSTANTINE the GREAT, in order to prevent civil commotions, and to fix his authority upon ſolid and ſtable foundations, made ſeveral changes, not only in the laws of the empire, but alſo in the form of the Roman government [*f*]. And as there were many important reaſons, which induced him to ſuit the adminiſtration of the church to theſe changes in the civil conſtitution, this neceſſarily introduced, among the biſhops, new degrees of eminence and rank. Three prelates had, before this, enjoyed a certain degree of pre-eminence over the reſt of the epiſcopal order, *viz.* the biſhops of *Rome*, *Antioch*, and *Alexandria*; and to theſe the biſhop of *Conſtantinople* was added, when the imperial reſidence was transferred to that city. Theſe four prelates anſwered to the four *prætorian prefects* created by CONSTANTINE; and it is poſſible that, in this very century, they were diſtinguiſhed by the Jewiſh title of Patriarchs. After theſe, followed the *exarchs*, who had the inſpection over ſeveral provinces, and anſwered to the appointment of certain civil officers who bore the ſame title. In a lower claſs, were the Metropolitans, who had only the government of one province, under whom were the *archbiſhops*, whoſe inſpection was confined to certain diſtricts. In this gradation, the *biſhops* brought up the rear; the ſphere of their authority was not, in all places, equally extenſive; being in ſome conſiderably ample, and in others confined within narrow limits. To theſe various eccleſiaſtical

Patriarchs.

Exarchs.

Archbiſhops.

Biſhops.

[*f*] See BOS, *Hiſtoire de la monarchie Françoiſe*, tom. i. p. 64. GIANNONE, *Hiſtoire de Naples*, tom. i. p. 94..152.

orders,

CENT. IV. PART II.

orders, we might add that of the *chorepiſcopi*, or ſuperintendents of the country churches; but this order was, in moſt places, ſuppreſſed by the biſhops, with a deſign to extend their own authority, and enlarge the ſphere of their power and juriſdiction [*g*].

The adminiſtration of the church divided into external and internal.

IV. The adminiſtration of the church was divided, by CONSTANTINE himſelf, into an *external* and an *internal* inſpection [*h*]. The latter, which was committed to biſhops and councils, related to *religious controverſies*; the *forms of divine worſhip*; the *offices of the prieſts*; the *vices of the eccleſiaſtical orders*, &c. The *external* adminiſtration of the church, the emperor aſſumed to himſelf. This comprehended all thoſe things that relate to the *outward ſtate* and *diſcipline* of the church; it likewiſe extended to all *conteſts* and *debates* that ſhould ariſe between the miniſters of the church, ſuperior as well as inferior, concerning their *poſſeſſions*, their *reputation*, their *rights* and *privileges*, their offences againſt the laws, and things of a like nature [*i*]; but no controverſies that related to matters purely religious were cognizable by this *external* inſpection. In conſequence of this artful diviſion of the eccleſiaſtical government, CONSTANTINE and his ſucceſſors called councils, preſided in them, appointed the judges of religious controverſies, terminated the differences which aroſe between the biſhops and the people, fixed the limits of the eccleſiaſtical provinces, took cognizance of the civil cauſes that ſubſiſted between the miniſters of the church, and puniſhed

[*g*] This appears from ſeveral paſſages in the uſeful work of LUD. THOMASSINUS, intitled, *Diſciplina Eccleſiæ vet. et novæ circa beneficia*, tom. i.

[*h*] EUSEB. *De vita Conſtantini*, lib. iv. cap. xxiv. p. 536.

[*i*] See the imperial laws both in JUSTINIAN's *Code*, and in the THEODOSIAN; as alſo GODOFRED. *ad Codic. Theodoſ.* tom. vi. p. 55. 58. 333, &c.

the

the crimes committed againſt the laws by the ordinary judges appointed for that purpoſe; giving over all cauſes purely eccleſiaſtical to the cognizance of biſhops and councils. But this famous diviſion of the adminiſtration of the church was never explained with perſpicuity, nor determined with a ſufficient degree of accuracy and preciſion; ſo that both in this and the following centuries, we find many tranſactions that ſeem abſolutely inconſiſtent with it. We find the emperors, for example, frequently determining matters purely eccleſiaſtical, and that belonged to the *internal* juriſdiction of the church: and, on the other hand, nothing is more frequent than the deciſions of biſhops and councils concerning things that relate merely to the *external* form and government of the church.

The rank and dignity of the biſhop of *Rome*.

V. In the epiſcopal order, the biſhop of *Rome* was the firſt in rank, and was diſtinguiſhed by a ſort of pre-eminence over all other prelates. Prejudices, ariſing from a great variety of cauſes, contributed to eſtabliſh this ſuperiority; but it was chiefly owing to certain circumſtances of grandeur and opulence, by which mortals, for the moſt part, form their ideas of pre-eminence and dignity, and which they generally confound with the reaſons of a juſt and legal authority. The biſhop of *Rome* ſurpaſſed all his brethren in the magnificence and ſplendor of the church over which he preſided; in the riches of his revenues and poſſeſſions; in the number and variety of his miniſters; in his credit with the people; and in his ſumptuous and ſplendid manner of living [*k*]. Theſe dazzling marks of human power, theſe ambiguous proofs of true greatneſs and felicity, had

[*k*] AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS gives a ſtriking deſcription of the luxury in which the biſhops of *Rome* lived, *Hiſt.* lib. xxvii. cap. iii. p. 337.

ſuch

CENT. IV. PART II.

ſuch a mighty influence upon the minds of the multitude, that the ſee of *Rome* became, in this century, a moſt ſeducing object of ſacerdotal ambition. Hence it happened, that when a new pontif was to be elected by the ſuffrages of the preſbyters and the people, the city of *Rome* was generally agitated with diſſenſions, tumults, and cabals, whoſe conſequences were often deplorable and fatal. The intrigues and diſturbances that prevailed in that city in the year 366, when, upon the death of LIBERIUS, another pontif was to be choſen in his place, are a ſufficient proof of what we have now advanced. Upon this occaſion, one faction elected DAMASUS to that high dignity, while the oppoſite party choſe URSICINUS, a deacon of the vacant church, to ſucceed LIBERIUS. This double election gave riſe to a dangerous ſchiſm, and to a ſort of civil war within the city of *Rome*, which was carried on with the utmoſt barbarity and fury, and produced the moſt cruel maſſacres and deſolations. This inhuman conteſt ended in the victory of DAMASUS; but whether his cauſe was more juſt than that of URSICINUS, is a queſtion not ſo eaſy to determine [*l*]. Neither of the two, indeed, ſeem to have been poſſeſſed of ſuch principles as conſtitute a good Chriſtian, much leſs of that exemplary virtue that ſhould diſtinguiſh a Chriſtian biſhop.

The limits of his authority.

VI. Notwithſtanding the pomp and ſplendor that ſurrounded the Roman ſee, it is, however, certain, that the biſhops of that city had not acquired, in this century, that pre-eminence of power and juriſdiction in the church which they afterwards enjoyed. In the eccleſiaſtical commonwealth, they were, indeed, the moſt eminent

[*l*] Among the other writers of the papal hiſtory, ſee BOWER's *Hiſtory of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 180, 181, 182.

order

order of citizens; but ſtill they were citizens as well as their brethren, and ſubject, like them, to the edicts and laws of the emperors. All religious cauſes of extraordinary importance were examined and determined, either by judges appointed by the emperors, or in councils aſſembled for that purpoſe, while thoſe of inferior moment were decided, in each diſtrict, by its reſpective biſhop. The eccleſiaſtical laws were enacted either by the emperor or by councils. None of the biſhops acknowledged, that they derived their authority from the permiſſion and appointment of the biſhop of *Rome*, or that they were created biſhops by the *favour of the apoſtolic ſee*. On the contrary, they all maintained, that they were the ambaſſadors and miniſters of JESUS CHRIST, and that their authority was derived from above [*m*]. It muſt, however, be obſerved, that, even in this century, ſeveral of thoſe ſteps were laid, by which the biſhops of *Rome* mounted afterwards to the ſummit of eccleſiaſtical power and deſpotiſm. Theſe ſteps were partly laid by the imprudence of the emperors, partly by the dexterity of the Roman prelates themſelves, and partly by the inconſiderate zeal and precipitate judgment of certain biſhops [*n*]. The fourth *canon* of the council, held

[*m*] Thoſe who deſire an ampler account of this matter, may conſult PETR. DE MARCA, *De concordia Sacerdotii et imperii*. DU PIN, *De antiqua eccleſiæ diſciplina*; and the very learned and judicious work of BLONDEL, *De la Primauté dans l'Egliſe*.

☞ [*n*] The imprudence of the emperor, and the precipitation of the biſhops, were ſingularly diſcovered in the following event, which favoured extremely the riſe and the ambition of the Roman pontiff: About the year 372, VALENTINIAN enacted a law, impowering the biſhop of *Rome* to examine and judge other biſhops, that religious diſputes might not be decided by profane or ſecular judges. The biſhops aſſembled in council at *Rome* in 378, not conſidering the fatal conſequences that muſt ariſe, from this imprudent law,

CENT. IV PART II.

held at *Sardis* in the year 347, is conſidered, by the votaries of the Roman pontif, as the principal ſtep to his ſovereignty in the church; but, in my opinion, it ought by no means to be looked upon in this point of view. For, not to inſiſt upon the reaſons that prove the authority of this council to be extremely dubious, nor upon thoſe which have induced ſome to regard its laws as groſsly corrupted, and others, to conſider them as entirely fictitious and ſpurious [*o*], it will be ſufficient to obſerve the impoſſibility of proving by the *canon* in queſtion, that the biſhops of *Sardis* were of opinion, that, in all caſes, an appeal might be made to the biſhop of *Rome*, in quality of ſupreme judge [*p*]. But ſuppoſing, for a moment, that this was their opinion, what would follow? Surely, that pretext for aſſuming a ſupreme authority muſt be very ſlender, which ariſes only from the decree of one obſcure council.

both to themſelves and to the church, declared their approbation of it in the ſtrongeſt terms, and recommended the execution of it in an addreſs to the emperor GRATIAN.—Some think, indeed, that this law impowered the Roman biſhop to judge only the biſhops within the limits of his juriſdiction, *i. e.* thoſe of the ſuburbicarian provinces. Others are of opinion, that this power was given only for a time, and extended to thoſe biſhops alone, who were concerned in the preſent ſchiſm. This laſt notion ſeems probable: but ſtill this privilege was an excellent inſtrument in the hands of ſacerdotal ambition.

[*o*] See MICH. GEDDES, *Diſſ. de canonibus Sardicenſibus*, which is to be found in his *Miſcellaneous Tracts*, tom. ii. p. 415.

☞ [*p*] The fourth canon of the council of *Sardis*, ſuppoſing it genuine and authentic, related only to the particular caſe of a biſhop's being depoſed by the neighbouring prelates, and demanding a permiſſion to make his defence. In that caſe, this canon prohibited the election of a ſucceſſor to the depoſed biſhop, before that the biſhop of *Rome* had examined the cauſe, and pronounced ſentence thereupon.

VII.

The authority of the biſhop of Conſtantinople is increaſed.

VII. CONSTANTINE the GREAT, by removing the ſeat of the empire to *Byzantium*, and building the city of *Conſtantinople*, raiſed up, in the biſhop of this new metropolis, a formidable rival to the Roman pontif, and a bulwark which menaced a vigorous oppoſition to his growing authority. For, as the emperor, in order to render *Conſtantinople* a ſecond *Rome*, enriched it with all the rights and privileges, honours, and ornaments, of the ancient capital of the world; ſo its biſhop, meaſuring his own dignity and rank by the magnificence of the new city, and its eminence, as the auguſt reſidence of the emperor, aſſumed an equal degree of dignity with the biſhop of *Rome*, and claimed a ſuperiority over all the reſt of the epiſcopal order. Nor did the emperors diſapprove of theſe high pretenſions, ſince they conſidered their own dignity as connected, in a certain meaſure, with that of the biſhop of their imperial city. Accordingly, in a council held at *Conſtantinople*, in the year 381, by the authority of THEODOSIUS the GREAT, the biſhop of that city was, during the abſence of the biſhop of *Alexandria*, and againſt the conſent of the Roman prelate, placed, by the third *canon* of that council, in the firſt rank after the biſhop of *Rome*, and, conſequently, above thoſe of *Alexandria* and *Antioch*. NECTARIUS was the firſt biſhop who enjoyed theſe new honours accumulated upon the ſee of *Conſtantinople*. His ſucceſſor, the celebrated JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, extended ſtill further the privileges of that ſee, and ſubmitted to its juriſdiction all *Thrace*, *Aſia*, and *Pontus* [q]; nor were the ſucceeding biſhops of

[q] See PETR. DE MARCA, *Diſſ. de Conſtantinop. Patriarchatus inſtitutione*, which is ſubjoined to his book, *De concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*. MICH. LEQUIEN, *Oriens Chriſtianus*, tom. i. p. 15. See alſo *An account of the government of the Chriſtian church for the firſt ſix hundred years*, by Dr. PARKER, biſhop of *Oxford*, p. 245.

CENT. IV. PART II.

that imperial city deſtitute of a fervent zeal to augment their privileges, and to extend their dominion.

This ſudden revolution in the eccleſiaſtical government, and this unexpected promotion of the biſhop of *Byzantium* to a higher rank, to the detriment of other prelates of the firſt eminence in the church, were productive of the moſt diſagreeable effects. For this promotion not only filled the biſhops of *Alexandria* with the bittereſt averſion to thoſe of *Conſtantinople*, but alſo excited thoſe deplorable contentions and diſputes between theſe latter and the Roman pontifs, which were carried on, for many ages, with ſuch various ſucceſs, and concluded, at length, in the entire ſeparation of the Latin and Greek churches.

The vices of the clergy.

VIII. The additions made by the emperors and others to the wealth, honours and advantages of the clergy, were followed with a proportionable augmentation of vices and luxury, particularly among thoſe of that ſacred order, who lived in great and opulent cities; and that many ſuch additions were made to that order after the time of CONSTANTINE, is a matter that admits of no diſpute. The *biſhops*, on the one hand, contended with each other, in the moſt ſcandalous manner, concerning the extent of their reſpective juriſdictions, while, on the other, they trampled upon the rights of the people, violated the privileges of the inferior miniſters, and imitated, in their conduct and in their manner of living, the arrogance, voluptuouſneſs, and luxury, of magiſtrates and princes [r]. This pernicious example was ſoon

[r] See SULPIT. SEVER. *Hiſt. Sacr.* lib. i. cap. xxiii. p. 74. lib. ii. cap. xxxii. p. 248. cap. li. p. 292. *Dialog.* i. cap. xxi. p. 426. Add to this the account given by CLARKSON, in his *Diſcourſe upon Liturgies*, p. 228. of the corrupt and profligate manners of the clergy, and, particularly, of the unbounded ambition of the biſhops, to enlarge the ſphere of their influence and authority.

followed

followed by the ſeveral eccleſiaſtical orders. The *preſbyters*, in many places, aſſumed an equality with the biſhops in point of rank and authority. We find alſo many complaints made, at this time, of the vanity and effeminacy of the *deacons*. Thoſe more particularly of the preſbyters and deacons, who filled the firſt ſtations of theſe orders, carried their pretenſions to an extravagant length, and were offended at the notion of being placed upon an equal footing with their colleagues. For this reaſon, they not only aſſumed the titles of *Archpreſbyters* and *Archdeacons*, but alſo claimed a degree of authority and power much ſuperior to that which was veſted in the other members of their reſpective orders.



IX. Several writers of great reputation lived in this century, and were ſhining ornaments to the countries to which they belonged. Among thoſe that flouriſhed in *Greece* and in the eaſtern provinces, the following ſeem to deſerve the firſt rank: The famous Greek writers.

EUSEBIUS PAMPHILUS, biſhop of *Cæſarea* in *Paleſtine*, a man of immenſe reading, juſtly famous for his profound knowledge of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and ſingularly verſed in other branches of literature, more eſpecially in all the different parts of ſacred erudition. Theſe eminent talents and acquiſitions were, however, accompanied with errors and defects, and he is ſaid to have inclined towards the ſentiments of thoſe, who look upon the three perſons in the godhead as different from each other in rank and dignity. Some have repreſented this learned prelate as a thorough Arian, but without foundation; if by an Arian be meant, one who embraces the doctrines taught by ARIUS, preſbyter of *Alexandria* [*s*].

PETER

[*s*] No writer has accuſed EUSEBIUS of Arianiſm, with more bitterneſs and erudition, than LE CLERC, in the ſecond

PETER of *Alexandria*, who is mentioned by EUSEBIUS with the higheſt encomiums [*t*].

ATHANASIUS, patriarch of *Alexandria*, celebrated on account of his learned and pious labours, and particularly famous for his warm and vigorous oppoſition to the Arians [*u*].

BASIL, ſurnamed the GREAT, biſhop of *Cæſarea*, who, in point of genius, controverſial ſkill, and a rich and flowing eloquence, was ſurpaſſed by very few in this century [*w*].

CYRIL, biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, who has left ſome catechetical diſcourſes, which he delivered in that city; he has been accuſed by many of intimate connexions with the Semi-Arians [*x*].

JOHN, ſurnamed CHRYSOSTOM, on account of his extraordinary eloquence, a man of a noble genius, governed ſucceſſively the churches of *Antioch* and *Conſtantinople* [*y*], and left behind him ſeveral

of his *Epiſtolæ Eccleſ. et Criticæ*, which are ſubjoined to his *Ars Critica* and NATALIS ALEXANDER, *Hiſt. Eccleſ. Nov. T. Sæc.* iv. *Diſſ.* xvii. p. 205. All, however, that theſe writers prove is, that EUSEBIUS maintained, that there was a certain diſparity and ſubordination between the perſons of the godhead. And ſuppoſe this to have been his opinion, it will not follow from thence that he was an Arian, unleſs that word be taken in a very extenſive and improper ſenſe. Nothing is more common than the ubuſive application of this term to perſons, who have held opinions quite oppoſite to thoſe of ARIUS, though perhaps they may have erred in other reſpects.

[*t*] *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. ix. cap. vi.

[*u*] EUSEBIUS RENAUDOTUS, in his *Hiſtory of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, p. 83. has collected all the accounts which the Oriental writers give of ATHANASIUS, of whoſe works the learned and juſtly celebrated Benedictine, BERNARD MONTFAUCON, has given a ſplendid edition in three volumes in folio.

[*w*] The works of BASIL were publiſhed, at *Paris*, in three volumes folio, by JULIEN GARNIER, a learned Benedictine.

[*x*] The later editions of the works of this prelate, are, thoſe publiſhed by Mr. MILLES and by AUGUSTUS TOUTTEE, a Benedictine monk.

[*y*] It muſt not be underſtood by this, that CHRYSOSTOM was biſhop of both theſe churches; he was *preacher* at *Antioch* (a func-

ſeveral monuments of his profound and extenſive erudition; as alſo diſcourſes [z] which he had preached with vaſt applauſe, and which are yet extant.

EPIPHANIUS, biſhop of *Salamis*, in the iſle of *Cyprus*, who wrote a book againſt all the hereſies that had ſprung up in the church until his time. This work has little or no reputation, as it is full of inaccuracies and errors, and diſcovers almoſt in every page the levity and ignorance of its author [a].

GREGORY NAZIENZEN and GREGORY of *Nyſſa*, who have obtained a very honourable place among the celebrated theological and polemic writers of this century, and not without foundation, as their works ſufficiently teſtify [b]. Their reputation, indeed, would have been yet more confirmed, had they been leſs attached to the writings of ORIGEN [c], and leſs infected with the falſe and vicious eloquence of the ſophiſts.

EPHRAIM, the Syrian, who has acquired an immortal name by the ſanctity of his converſation and manners, and by the multitude of thoſe excellent writings in which he has combated the ſectaries, explained the ſacred writings, and un-

(a function, indeed, which before him was always attached to the epiſcopal dignity), and afterwards patriarch of *Conſtantinople*.

[z] The beſt edition of the works of CHRYSOSTOM, is that publiſhed by MONTFAUCON, in eleven volumes folio.

[a] The works of EPIPHANIUS have been tranſlated into Latin, and publiſhed, with notes, by the learned PETAU. His life, written by GERVAS, appeared at *Paris* in 1738, in 4to.

[b] There are ſome good editions of theſe two writers, which we owe to the care and induſtry of two learned French editors of the laſt century. ☞ *Viz.* the Abbot BILLY, who publiſhed the works of GREGORY NAZIENZEN at *Paris*, in two volumes, folio, in the year 1609, with a Latin tranſlation and learned notes; and Father FRONTON DU DUC, who publiſhed thoſe of GREGORY of *Nyſſa* in 1605.

☞ [c] The charge of *Origeniſm* ſeems to have been brought by the ancient writers only againſt GREGORY of *Nyſſa*.

folded the moral duties and obligations of Chriſtians [*d*].

Beſides the learned men now mentioned, there are ſeveral others, of whoſe writings but a ſmall number have ſurvived the ruins of time; ſuch as PAMPHILUS, a martyr, and an intimate friend of EUSEBIUS; DIODORUS, biſhop of *Tarſus*; HOSIUS, of *Cordova*; DIDYMUS, of *Alexandria*; EUSTATHIUS, biſhop of *Antioch*; AMPHILOCHIUS, biſhop of *Iconium*; PALLADIUS, the writer of the *Lauſiac Hiſtory* [*e*]; MACARIUS the elder and the younger; APOLLINARIUS the elder; and ſome others, who are frequently mentioned on account of their erudition, and the remarkable events in which they were concerned.

The principal Latin writers.

X. The LATINS alſo were not without writers of conſiderable note, the principal of whom we ſhall point out here:

HILARY, biſhop of *Poictiers*, acquired a name by XII *books concerning the Trinity*, which he wrote againſt the Arians, and ſeveral other productions. He was a man of penetration and genius; notwithſtanding which, he has, for the moſt part, rather copied in his writings TERTULLIAN and ORIGEN, than given us the fruits of his own ſtudy and invention [*f*].

[*d*] There is a large and accurate account of this excellent writer, in the *Biblioth. Oriental. Vaticanæ* of JOSEPH SIMON ASSEMAN, tom. i. p. 24. Several works of EPHRAIM have been publiſhed, in Greek, at *Oxford*, of which GERARD VOSSIUS has given a Latin edition. An edition in Syriac, of the ſame works, was publiſhed at *Rome*, not long ago, by STEPH. EUOD. ASSEMAN.

☞ [*e*] This is the hiſtory of the *ſolitaries*, or *hermits*, which derived the name of *Lauſiac* hiſtory from LAUSUS, governor of *Cappadocia*, at whoſe requeſt it was compoſed, and to whom it was dedicated by PALLADIUS.

[*f*] There is a very accurate and ample account of HILARY, in the *Hiſtoire Litteraire de la France*, tom. i. Siecle iv. p. 139—193. The beſt edition we have of his works is that publiſhed by the French Benedictines.

LAC-

LACTANTIUS [*g*], the most eloquent of the Latin writers in this century, exposed the absurdity of the Pagan superstitions in his *Divine Institutions*, which are written with uncommon purity and elegance. He wrote also upon other subjects; but was much more successful in refuting the errors of others, than careful in observing and correcting his own [*h*].

AMBROSE, prefect, and afterwards bishop of *Milan*, was not destitute of a certain degree of elegance both of genius and style; his sentiments of things were, by no means, absurd; but he did not escape the prevailing defect of that age, a want of solidity, accuracy, and order [*i*].

JEROME, a monk of *Palestine*, rendered, by his learned and zealous labours, such eminent services to the Christian cause, as will hand down his name with honour to the latest posterity. But this superior and illustrious merit was accompanied, and, in some measure, obscured, by very great defects. His complexion was excessively warm and choleric; his bitterness against those who differed from him, extremely keen; and his thirst of glory insatiable. He was so prone to censure, that several persons, whose lives were not only irreproachable, but even exemplary, be-

[*g*] See a complete account of LACTANTIUS, *Histoire Litteraire de la France*, tom. i. Siecle iv. p. 65.

[☞ *b*] LACTANTIUS considers CHRIST's mission as having no other end, than that of leading mankind to virtue by the most sublime precepts, and the most perfect example. The charge of Manicheism brought against this eminent writer, is refuted in the most evident and satisfactory manner by Dr. LARDNER, in the seventh volume of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, where the reader may find an ample and interesting account of his character and his writings. Among those who have been editors of the works of LACTANTIUS, the most reputed are BUNEMANN, HEUMANN, WALCHIUS, and LANGUET DE FRESNOY.]

[*i*] The works of St. AMBROSE have been published, by the Benedictines, in two volumes in folio.

came

came the objects of his unjuſt accuſations. All this, joined to his ſuperſtitious turn of mind, and the enthuſiaſtic encomiums which he laviſhed upon a falſe and degenerate ſort of piety which prevailed in his time, ſunk his reputation greatly, and that even in the eſteem of the candid and the wiſe. His writings are voluminous, but not all equally adapted to inſtruct and edify. His interpretations of the holy ſcriptures, and his *epiſtles*, are thoſe of his productions which ſeem the moſt proper to be read with profit [*k*].

THE fame of AUGUSTIN, biſhop of *Hippo*, in *Africa*, filled the whole Chriſtian world; and not without reaſon, as a variety of great and ſhining qualities were united in the character of that illuſtrious man. A ſublime genius, an uninterrupted and zealous purſuit of truth, an indefatigable application, an invincible patience, a ſincere piety, and a ſubtile and lively wit, conſpired to eſtabliſh his fame upon the moſt laſting foundations. It is however certain, that the accuracy and ſolidity of his judgment were, by no means, proportionable to the eminent talents now mentioned; and that, upon many occaſions, he was more guided by the violent impulſe of a warm imagination, than by the cool dictates of reaſon and prudence. Hence that ambiguity which appears in his writings, and which has ſometimes rendered the moſt attentive readers uncertain with reſpect to his real ſentiments; and hence alſo the juſt complaints which many have made of the contradictions that are ſo frequent in his works, and of the levity and precipitation with which he ſet

[*k*] The defects of JEROME are expoſed by LE CLERC, in his *Quæſtiones Hieronymianæ*, publiſhed at *Amſterdam*, in 12mo, in the year 1700. The Benedictine monks have given an edition of the works of this father in five volumes, which was republiſhed, at *Verona*, by VALLARSIUS, with conſiderable additions.

himſelf

himſelf to write upon a variety of ſubjects, before he had examined them with a ſufficient degree of attention and diligence [*l*].

OPTATUS, biſhop of *Milevi*, in *Numidia*, acquired no ſmall degree of reputation, by a work which he wrote in *ſix books* againſt the *Schiſm* of the *Donatiſts* [*m*].

PAULINUS, biſhop of *Nola*, left behind him ſome poems and epiſtles, which are ſtill extant; but are not remarkable either for their excellence or their meanneſs [*n*].

RUFINUS, preſbyter of *Aquileia*, is famous on account of his Latin tranſlations of ORIGEN and other Greek writers, his commentaries on ſeveral paſſages of the holy ſcriptures, and his bitter conteſt with JEROME. He would have obtained a very honourable place among the Latin writers of this century, had it not been his misfortune to have had the powerful and foul-mouthed JEROME for his adverſary [*o*].

[*l*] An accurate and ſplendid edition of the works of St. AUGUSTIN has been given by the Benedictines, ſince that of the divines of *Louvain*. This elegant edition bears the title of *Antwerp*, where it was publiſhed, with ſome augmentations, by LE CLERC, under the fictitious name of Jo. PHEREPONUS. The Jeſuits, however, pretend to have found many defects in this edition.

[*m*] Since the edition of OPTATUS, publiſhed by ALBASPINÆUS, another has appeared, which we owe to the care and induſtry of DU PIN, doctor of the *Sorbonne*.

[*n*] The beſt edition of PAULINUS is that which was publiſhed at *Paris*, in the year 1685, by LE BRUN.

☞ [*o*] RUFINUS and JEROME had lived for many years, in the moſt intimate and tender friendſhip, which ended in a violent rupture, on occaſion of a tranſlation which the former made of ſome of the works of ORIGEN, particularly his *Book of principles*. For an account of RUFINUS, ſee RICH. SIMON, *Critique de la Bibliotheque des Auteurs Eccleſ. par* M. DU PIN, tom. i. p. 124, &c. An ample account of the ſame writer is given by JUSTUS FONTANINUS, *Hiſt. Literar. Aquileienſis*, lib. v. p. 149.

As

CENT. IV. PART II.

As to PHILASTRIUS, DAMASUS, JUVENCUS, and other writers of that obſcure claſs, we refer the reader, for an account of them, to thoſe authors whoſe principal deſign is to give an exact enumeration of the Chriſtian writers. We ſhall add, nevertheleſs, to the liſt already given, SULPITIUS SEVERUS, by birth a Gaul, and the moſt eminent hiſtorical writer of this century [*p*]; as alſo PRUDENTIUS, a Spaniard, a poet of a happy and elegant genius.

## CHAP. III.

### *Concerning the doctrine of the Chriſtian church in this century.*

The ſtate of religion.

I. THE fundamental principles of the Chriſtian doctrine were preſerved hitherto uncorrupted and entire in moſt churches, though it muſt be confeſſed, that they were often explained and defended in a manner that diſcovered the greateſt ignorance, and an utter confuſion of ideas. The diſputes carried on in the council of *Nice*, concerning the three perſons in the Godhead, afford a remarkable example of this, particularly in the language and explanations of thoſe who approved of the deciſions of that council. So little light, preciſion, and order, reigned in their diſcourſes, that they appeared to ſubſtitute three Gods in the place of one.

Nor did the evil end here; for thoſe vain fictions, which an attachment to the Platonic philoſophy, and to popular opinions, had engaged the

[*p*] See *Hiſtoire Litteraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 95; as alſo HIERON. a PRATO, who has written, with great accuracy, the life of this hiſtorian.

greateſt

greateſt part of the Chriſtian doctors to adopt, before the time of CONSTANTINE, were now confirmed, enlarged, and embelliſhed, in various ways. From hence aroſe that extravagant veneration for departed ſaints, and thoſe abſurd notions of a certain *fire* deſtined to purify ſeparate ſouls, that now prevailed, and of which the public marks were every where to be ſeen. Hence alſo the celibacy of prieſts, the worſhip of images and relics, which, in proceſs of time, almoſt utterly deſtroyed the Chriſtian religion, or, at leaſt, eclipſed its luſtre, and corrupted its very eſſence in the moſt deplorable manner.

The increaſe of ſuperſtition.

II. An enormous train of different ſuperſtitions were gradually ſubſtituted in the place of true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution was owing to a variety of cauſes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a prepoſterous deſire of imitating the Pagan rites, and of blending them with the Chriſtian worſhip, and that idle propenſity which the generality of mankind have towards a gaudy and oſtentatious religion, all contributed to eſtabliſh the reign of ſuperſtition upon the ruins of Chriſtianity. Accordingly, frequent pilgrimages were undertaken, to *Paleſtine*, and to the tombs of the martyrs, as if there alone the ſacred principles of virtue, and the certain hope of ſalvation, were to be acquired [*q*]. The reins being once let looſe to ſuperſtition, which knows no bounds, abſurd notions and idle ceremonies multiplied every day. Quantities of duſt and earth brought from *Pale-*

[*q*] See GREGOR. NYSSENI, *Orat. ad eos qui Hieroſolymam adeunt*, tom. iii. opp. p. 568. HIERONYMUS, *Epiſt.* xiii. *ad Paulinum de inſtituto Monachi*, tom. i. p. 66. JAC. GODOFRED. *ad Codicem Theodoſian.* tom. vi. p. 65. PETRI WESSELINGII. *Diſſertat. de cauſis peregrinat. Hieroſolymit. quam Itinerario Burdigalenſi præmiſit*, inter *vetera Romanor. Itineraria*, p. 537.

*ſtine*,

CENT. IV. PART II.

*ſtine*, and other places remarkable for their ſuppoſed ſanctity, were handed about as the moſt powerful remedies againſt the violence of wicked ſpirits, and were ſold and bought every where at enormous prices [*r*]. The public proceſſions and ſupplications, by which the Pagans endeavoured to appeaſe their gods, were now adopted into the Chriſtian worſhip, and celebrated with great pomp and magnificence in ſeveral places. The virtues that had formerly been aſcribed to the Heathen temples, to their luſtrations, to the ſtatues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Chriſtian churches, to water conſecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the ſame privileges, that the former enjoyed under the darkneſs of Paganiſm, were conferred upon the latter under the light of the goſpel, or, rather, under that cloud of ſuperſtition that was obſcuring its glory. It is true, that, as yet, images were not very common; nor were there any ſtatues at all. But it is, at the ſame time, as undoubtedly certain, as it is extravagant and monſtrous, that the worſhip of the *martyrs* was modelled, by degrees, according to the religious ſervices that were paid to the gods before the coming of CHRIST [*s*].

From theſe facts, which are but ſmall ſpecimens of the ſtate of Chriſtianity at this time, the diſcerning reader will eaſily perceive what detriment the church received from the peace and proſperity procured by CONSTANTINE, and from the imprudent methods employed to allure the different nations to embrace the goſpel. The brevity we have propoſed to obſerve in this hiſtory, prevents our entering into an ample detail of the diſmal

[*r*] AUGUSTINUS, *De civitate Dei*, lib. xxii. cap. viii. § 6.

[*s*] For a full account of this matter, ſee BEAUSOBRE, *Hiſt. du Manicheiſm*, tom. ii. p. 642.

effects which arose from the progress and the baneful influence of superstition, now become universal.

Hence pious frauds.

III. This, indeed, among other unhappy effects, opened a wide door to the endless frauds of those odious impostors, who were so far destitute of all principle, as to enrich themselves by the ignorance and errors of the people. Rumours were artfully spread abroad of prodigies and miracles to be seen in certain places (a trick often practised by the Heathen priests), and the design of these reports was to draw the populace, in multitudes, to these places, and to impose upon their credulity. These stratagems were generally successful; for the ignorance and slowness of apprehension of the people, to whom every thing that is new and singular appears miraculous, rendered them easily the dupes of this abominable artifice [*t*]. Nor was this all: certain tombs were falsely given out for the sepulchres of saints [*u*] and confessors; the list of the saints was augmented with fictitious names, and even robbers were converted into martyrs [*w*]. Some buried the bones of dead men in certain retired places, and then affirmed, that they were divinely admonished, by a dream, that the body of some friend of God lay there [*x*]. Many, especially of the monks, travelled through the different provinces; and not only sold, with the most frontless impudence, their fictitious relics, but also deceived the eyes of the multitude with ludicrous combats with evil spirits or

[*t*] HENRY DODWELL, *Dissert.* ii. *in Irenæum*, § 56. p. 196. LE CLERC, in his *Appendix Augustinian*, p. 492. 550. 575.

[*u*] *Concil. Carthag.* v. *Canon* xiv. tom. i. *Conciliorum*, p. 988. edit. Harduini.

[*w*] SULPITIUS SEVERUS, *De vita S. Martini*, cap. viii.

[*x*] AUGUSTIN. *Sermone* cccxviii. § 1. tom. v. opp. p. 886. edit. Antwerp.

genii

genii [*y*]. A whole volume would be requiſite to contain an enumeration of the various frauds which artful knaves practiſed, with ſucceſs, to delude the ignorant, when true religion was almoſt entirely ſuperſeded by horrid ſuperſtition.

Verſions of the holy ſcriptures.

IV. Many of the learned in this century, undertook tranſlations of the holy ſcriptures, but few ſucceeded in this arduous enterprize. Among the many Latin verſions of the ſacred books, that of JEROME was diſtinguiſhed by its undoubted ſuperiority [*z*]. The ſame ingenious and indefatigable writer, whoſe ſkill in the languages was by no means inconſiderable, employed much pains upon the Greek verſion of the ſeventy interpreters, in order to give a more correct edition of it than had appeared before his time: and it is ſaid, that EUSEBIUS, ATHANASIUS, and EUTHALIUS, had embarked in an undertaking of the ſame nature [*a*]. The number of interpreters was very conſiderable, among whom JEROME, HILARY, EUSEBIUS, DIODORUS of *Tarſus*, RUFINUS, EPHRAIM the Syrian, THEODORE of *Heraclea*, CHRYSOSTOM, ATHANASIUS, and DIDYMUS, are generally eſteemed worthy of the firſt rank. It is however certain, that, even of theſe firſt-rate commentators, few have diſcovered a juſt diſcernment, or a ſound judgment, in their laborious expoſitions of the ſacred writings. RUFINUS, THEODORE of *Heraclea*, and DIODORE of *Tarſus*, with ſome others, have, indeed, followed the natural ſignification of the words [*b*]; the reſt, after the

[*y*] See GODOFRED. *ad cod. Theod.* tom. iii. p. 172. AUGUSTIN. *De opere Monachor.* cap. xxviii. § 36. p. 364. tom. vi. opp. HIERONYM. *Epiſt. ad Ruſticum*, tom. i. opp. p. 45.

[*z*] See Jo. FRANC. BUDDEI *Iſagoge ad Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1532.

[*a*] FRICKIUS, *De Canone N. T.* p. 18.

[*b*] SIMON, *Critique de la Bibliotheque des Auteurs Eccleſiaſt. par* DU PIN, tom. i. p. 51. 90. 129, tom. iv. p. 335; as alſo

the example of ORIGEN, are laborious in the search of far-fetched interpretations, and pervert the expreſſions of ſcripture, which they but half underſtand, by applying them, or rather ſtraining them, to matters with which they have no connexion [*c*]. St. AUGUSTIN and TYCHONIUS endeavoured to eſtabliſh plain and wiſe rules for the interpretation of ſcripture, but their efforts were unſucceſsful [*d*].

The method of explaining the doctrines of Chriſtianity, followed at this time.

V. The doctrines of Chriſtianity had not a better fate than the ſacred ſcriptures from whence they are drawn. ORIGEN was the great model whom the moſt eminent of the Chriſtian doctors followed in their explications of the truths of the goſpel, which were, of conſequence, explained, according to the rules of the Platonic philoſophy, as it was corrected and modified by that learned father for the inſtruction of the youth. Thoſe who deſire a more ample and accurate account of this matter, may conſult GREGORY NAZIANZEN among the Greeks, and AUGUSTIN among the Latins, who were followed, for a long time, as the only patterns worthy of imitation, and who, next to ORIGEN, may be conſidered as the parents and ſupporters of the *philoſophical* or *ſcholaſtic theology*. They were both zealous Platonics, and holding, for certain, all the tenets of that philoſopher that were not totally repugnant to the truths of Chriſtianity, they laid them down as fundamental principles, and drew from them a great variety of ſubtle concluſions, which neither CHRIST nor PLATO ever thought of.

Platonics.

alſo *Hiſt. Critique des principaux Commentateurs du N. T.* cap. vi. p. 88, &c.

[*c*] See GREGOR. NAZIANZ. *Carmen de Seipſo*, in TOLLIUS's *Inſignia Itineris Italici*, p. 27. 57.

[*d*] This may be ſeen in the VI books which AUGUSTIN wrote concerning the *Chriſtian doctrine*, and in the *rules* of interpretation laid down by TYCHONIUS, which are to be found in the *Biblioth. Patr. Maxim.* tom. vi. p. 48.

CENT. IV. PART II.

Myſtics.

This, however, was not the only ſect that flouriſhed at this time. That order of fanatics, who maintained, that the knowledge of divine things was to be acquired, not by reaſoning, but by ſtill contemplation, and by turning the eye of the mind upon itſelf in an entire abſence from all external and ſenſible objects, became now more numerous, and increaſed every day. This appears from many circumſtances, particularly from the ſwarms of monks that almoſt overſpread the Chriſtian world; and alſo from the books of DIONYSIUS, the pretended chief of the Myſtics, which ſeem to have been forged, in this century, under that venerable name, by ſome member of that fanatical tribe.

The didactic writers.

VI. Among the writers of this century, who publiſhed expoſitions of the Chriſtian doctrine, the firſt place is due to CYRIL of *Jeruſalem*, juſtly celebrated for his *catechetical diſcourſes*, which nothing but a partial blindneſs to the truth could have induced any to attribute to a more modern author [*e*]. Some have ranked LACTANTIUS in the claſs of writers now under conſideration, but without reaſon; ſince it is well known, that the labours of that eloquent author were rather employed in refuting the errors of idolatry, than in explaining the truths of the goſpel. The *ſyſtem of doctrine addreſſed to the clergy and laity*, and which, by many, has been attributed to ATHANASIUS, ſeems to be of a much later date. There are, however, many things in the works of CHRYSOSTOM, ATHANASIUS, the GREGORIES, and others, by which we may be enabled to form a juſt idea of the manner in which the principal points of the Chriſtian doctrine were explained by learned men in this cen-

[*e*] See Jo. FECHTII *Comment. de origine miſſarum in honorem ſanctorum*, p. 404.

tury.

tury. We may more particularly be aſſiſted in this matter, by the XII books of HILARY, concerning the *Trinity*; the *Ancoratus* of EPIPHANIUS, in which the doctrine of ſcripture, concerning CHRIST *and the Holy Ghoſt*, is explained at large; the treatiſe of PACIAN, concerning *baptiſm*, addreſſed to the *catechumens*; and the two books of CHRYSOSTOM upon the ſame ſubject. We need not mention here the various works of JEROME and AUGUSTIN, in which appear the laborious and noble efforts of theſe great men to inſpire into the minds of the people juſt notions of religion, and to detect and refute the errors of thoſe who were enemies of the truth.

The ſtate of Polemic divinity.

VII. The controverſial writings, that were levelled againſt thoſe who were conſidered as heretics, were entirely deſtitute of that ancient ſimplicity, which is the natural and the beautiful garb of truth. That ſimplicity was now ſucceeded by logical ſubtilties, acute ſophiſms, ſharp invectives, and other diſingenuous arts, more worthy of the patrons of error, than of the defenders of the *wiſdom that is from above*. We find, accordingly, many great and eminent men complaining of this abuſe, and endeavouring, in vain, to oppoſe the muddy torrent of ſcurrility and dialectic that was overflowing the Chriſtian ſchools [*f*]. I paſs in ſilence thoſe rhetorical figures and ornaments, by which many evaded the arguments of their adverſaries, and artfully perplexed the true ſtate of the caſe; that odious cuſtom, alſo, of exciting the popular reſentment againſt thoſe who differed from them, that was obſerved by ſome, and that total want

[*f*] METHODIUS apud EPIPHANIUM *Hæreſ.* lxiv. tom. i. opp. p. 563. GREGOR. NAZIAN. in many places, and others.

CENT. IV. PART II.

of order and perſpicuity that was chargeable upon almoſt all. Several writers of this age are ſo far from diſowning theſe indecent qualities, that they ſeem, on the contrary, to glory in them. It muſt, indeed, be obſerved, that the adverſaries of the truth uſed the ſame inglorious arms, though this does not in the leaſt diminiſh the reproach that is on this account due to its friends.

Diſingenuous methods of diſputing uſed.

VIII. New methods of diſputing were alſo added to thoſe that were practiſed in former times: for the truth of doctrines was now proved by the number of martyrs that had profeſſed them, by miracles, by the confeſſion of *demons*, i. e. of perſons poſſeſſed with evil ſpirits. The ſmalleſt degree of diſcernment will perſuade any one how ambiguous this method of reaſoning was; how dangerous to the truth, by furniſhing innumerable occaſions for the exerciſe of fraud and impoſture. And, I fear, that the greateſt part of thoſe who uſed ſuch arguments, however illuſtrious and reſpectable they may have been, will be found, upon examination, chargeable with the dangerous and criminal deſign of impoſing upon their brethren. AMBROSE, in his diſputes with the Arians, produced men poſſeſſed with devils, who, upon the approach of the relicks of GERVASIUS and PROTASIUS, were obliged to acknowledge, with loud cries, that the doctrine of the council of *Nice*, concerning the three perſons of the godhead, was true; and that of the Arians not only falſe, but alſo of moſt dangerous conſequence. This teſtimony of the prince of darkneſs was regarded, by AMBROSE, as an unexceptionable argument in favour of his hypotheſis. The Arians, on the other hand, held this prodigy in the utmoſt deriſion, and maintained that AMBROSE had ſuborned theſe infernal witneſſes by a weighty

weighty bribe [*g*]; and I make no doubt, but many will be more diſpoſed to believe the Arians, than to credit AMBROSE, though he be enrolled in the order of the ſaints, and they ſtigmatized in the liſt of heretics [*b*].

The chief controverſialiſts.

IX. There were, in this century, ſeveral controverſialiſts of conſiderable note. For beſides APOLLINARIS, GREGORY NAZIANZEN, CYRIL of *Alexandria*, and others, who diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the liſts againſt the emperor JULIAN; many others diſputed with victorious force and an happy ſucceſs againſt the worſhippers of the gods. Of this number were, LACTANTIUS, ATHANASIUS, JULIUS FIRMICUS MATERNUS, APOLLINARIS the younger, whoſe excellent writings againſt PORPHYRY are unhappily loſt; AUGUSTIN, in thoſe books *of the City of God*, and in the III books againſt the Pagans, which have alſo periſhed; and above all, EUSEBIUS of *Cæſarea*, in his *Evangelical Preparation*, and his *book againſt* HIEROCLES. EUSEBIUS EMESENUS, DIODORE of *Tarſus*, and St. CHRYSOSTOM, whoſe treatiſe on that ſubject is ſtill extant, employed their learned labours, to bring over the Jews to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. EPHRAIM of *Syria* [*i*], JAMES of *Niſibis*, DIDYMUS and AUDENTIUS, attacked the whole body of heretics; as did alſo EPIPHANIUS, in his voluminous work *concerning hereſies*, intitled, *Panarium*, and GRE-

[*g*] AMBROS. *Epiſt.* xxii. p. 878, &c. PAULINUS, *vita Ambroſii*, p. 81.

[*b*] See LE CLERC, *Appendix Auguſtiniana*, p. 375. GREGOR. NYSS. *vita Gregorii Neocæſarienſis*, tom. ii. opp. p. 977, 978. SULPITIUS SEVERUS, *Hiſt. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. xxxviii. p. 261.

[*i*] See JOS. SIM. ASSEMAN. *Biblioth. Oriental Clement. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 118. 125. From the extracts, which this learned compiler has given of the works of EPHRAIM, it appears, that he was more diſtinguiſhed by his piety and genius, than by his ſkill in the managing of controverſy.

CENT. IV. PART II.

GORY NAZIANZEN with more brevity in his *diſcourſe concerning faith.* The books of AUGUSTIN and PHILASTRIUS, on the ſame ſubject, contain rather a liſt than a refutation of the ſeveral ſects.

Moral writers.

X. If the growth and perfection of a ſcience were to be eſtimated by the multitude of writers it produces, that of *morals* muſt have flouriſhed greatly at this time, for the number of thoſe was very conſiderable, who applied themſelves to that excellent ſtudy. Among the eaſtern writers, JAMES, biſhop of *Niſibis* [*k*], and EPHRAIM, biſhop of *Syria*, became eminent for their zeal and aſſiduity in inculcating the precepts of morality. The writings of BASIL the GREAT, GREGORY of *Nyſſa*, CHRYSOSTOM, AMBROSE, AUGUSTIN, and ſeveral others, upon moral ſubjects, are neither worthy of high encomiums, nor of entire contempt, as they contain a ſtrange mixture of excellent reflexions, and inſipid details, concerning the duties of the Chriſtian life. Among the productions of theſe writers, many give the preference to the III books of AMBROSE, *concerning the duty of the miniſters of the church*, which are written in the manner of CICERO, and are juſtly commended for the pious intention they diſcover, and the beautiful ſentiments they contain, though there be many things in them worthy of reprehenſion. But MACARIUS, an Egyptian monk [*l*], undoubtedly deſerves the firſt rank among the practical writers of this time, as his works diſplayed, ſome few

[*k*] JOS. SIM. ASSEMANN. in the work quoted in the preceding note, tom. i. p. 17. thinks, that the writings attributed to the biſhop of *Niſibis*, belong rather to the biſhop of *Saruga*; he however corrects, in ſome meaſure, this notion in his *Addenda*, p. 558.

[*l*] See the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. i. Januar. p. 1005.

things excepted [*m*], the brighteſt and moſt lovely portraiture of ſanctity and virtue.

The defects of theſe moral writers.

XI. It muſt, however, be obſerved, that almoſt all the writers of this claſs are defective in ſeveral reſpects. They have been entirely negligent of order in their compoſitions, and have taken no ſort of care to treat with method and preciſion the ſubjects they undertook to explain. They ſeldom define their terms, and pour out their pious, but incoherent, ideas in fortuitous combinations, juſt as they come uppermoſt. They, moreover, neglect deducing the duties of mankind from their true principles, and even ſometimes derive them from doctrines and precepts that are either manifeſtly falſe, or, at leaſt, whoſe nature and meaning are not determined with any degree of accuracy. And hence it is, that the greateſt part of them are extremely defective, when they come to demonſtrate the *obligations* of virtue, and the *incongruity* and *unfitneſs* of vice. Theſe pretended demonſtrations, inſtead of being deduced by proper concluſions from the reaſon of things and the divine laws, are nothing more than a collection of airy fancies, cold and inſipid allegories, quaint and ſubtile conceits, which are more proper to afford amuſement to the imagination, than light to the underſtanding, or conviction to the judgment.

The number of the myſtics increaſed, and their doctrine propagated.

XII. But, however defective this method of inculcating the duties of morality may have been, it was much more tolerable than that which was followed by the amphibious diſciples of CHRIST and PLATO, thoſe Alexandrian philoſophers, of whom AMMONIUS SACCA was the chief. The

☞ [*m*] The things here excepted by Dr. MOSHEIM, are ſome ſuperſtitious tenets that are to be found in the writings of MACARIUS, and alſo certain opinions that ſeem tainted with *Origeniſm*.

*double doctrine* of morals which they invented, and which was compounded of two ſyſtems, the one ſurpaſſing the other in perfection, gained much ground, in this century, to the great detriment of true religion. A circumſtance every way proper to convince us of the growth and progreſs of this fanatical ſect is, that thoſe who, in former times had inculcated a ſecret doctrine concerning divine things, totally different from that which was publicly propagated among the multitude, gave now the finiſhing touch to this doctrine, and formed it into a ſyſtem. The famous Grecian fanatic, who gave himſelf out for DIONYSIUS the Areopagite, diſciple of St. PAUL, and who, under the protection of this venerable name, gave laws and inſtructions to thoſe that were deſirous of raiſing their ſouls above all human things, in order to unite them to their great ſource by ſublime contemplation, lived, moſt probably, in this century, though ſome place him before, others after the preſent period [*n*]. No ſooner were the writings and inſtructions of this fanatic handed about among the Greeks and Syrians, and particularly among the *ſolitaries* and monks, than a gloomy cloud of religious darkneſs began to ſpread itſelf over the minds of

[*n*] Thoſe who have written concerning this impoſtor, are enumerated by Jo. FRANC. BUDDEUS, in his *Iſagoge ad Theologiam*, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 175. See alſo Jo. LAUNII *Judicium de ſcriptis Dionyſii*, tom. ii. opp. part I. p. 562. LA CROZE (in his *Hiſtoire du Chriſtianiſm d'Ethiepe*, p. 10.) endeavours to prove that SYNESIUS, an Egyptian biſhop, and alſo the moſt celebrated philoſopher of the fifth century, compoſed the writings attributed to DIONYSIUS, in order to defend the doctrine of thoſe who held that CHRIST was only poſſeſſed of *one nature*. The arguments, however, of LA CROZE are weak. Nor are thoſe more ſatisfactory, which the learned BARRATIERE has employed, in a diſſertation added to his book *De ſucceſſione Rom. Epiſcop.* p. 286. to prove that DIONYSIUS of *Alexandria* was the true author of the writings in queſtion.

many,

many. An incredible number of proſelytes was added to that chimerical ſect, who maintained, that communion with God was to be ſought by mortifying ſenſe, by withdrawing the mind from all external objects, by macerating the body with hunger and labour, and by a holy ſort of indolence, which confined all the activity of the ſoul to a lazy contemplation of things ſpiritual and eternal.

Monkiſh ſocieties.

XIII. The progreſs of this ſect appears evidently from the prodigious number of ſolitary monks and ſequeſtered virgins, which, upon the return of tranquillity to the church, had over-run the whole Chriſtian world with an amazing rapidity. Many of this order of men had, for a long time, been known among the Chriſtians, and had led ſilent and ſolitary lives in the deſarts of *Egypt*; but ANTONY was the firſt who formed them into a regular body, engaged them to live in ſociety with each other, and preſcribed to them fixed rules for the direction of their conduct [*o*]. Theſe regulations which ANTONY had made in *Egypt* were, the year following, introduced into *Paleſtine* and *Syria* by his diſciple HILARION. Almoſt about the ſame time, AONES, or EUGENIUS, with their companions, GADDANAS and AZYZUS, inſtituted the monaſtic order in *Meſopotamia*, and the adjacent countries [*p*]; and their example was followed with ſuch rapid ſucceſs, that, in a ſhort time, the whole eaſt was filled with a lazy ſet of mortals, who, abandoning all human connexions, advantages, pleaſures, and concerns, wore out a languiſhing

[*o*] For a full account of ANTONY, and the *diſcipline* eſtabliſhed by him, ſee the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. ii. Januar. ad *d.* 17. p. 107.

[*p*] See Jos. SIMON. ASSEMAN. *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. iii. part II. p. 48.

and

CENT. IV. PART II.

and miſerable life, amidſt the hardſhips of want, and various kinds of ſuffering, in order to arrive at a more cloſe and rapturous communion with God and angels. The Chriſtian church would never have been diſgraced by this cruel and unſociable enthuſiaſm, nor would any have been ſubjected to thoſe keen torments of mind and body to which it gave riſe, had not many Chriſtians been unwarily caught by the ſpecious appearance, and the pompous ſound, of that maxim of the ancient philoſophy, "That, in order to "the attainment of true felicity and communion "with God, it was neceſſary that the ſoul ſhould "be ſeparated from the body even here below, "and that the body was to be macerated and "mortified for this purpoſe."

The progreſs of monkery.

XIV. From the eaſt this gloomy inſtitution paſſed into the weſt, and firſt into *Italy*, and its neighbouring iſlands, though it is utterly uncertain who tranſplanted it thither [*q*]. St. MARTIN, the celebrated biſhop of *Tours*, erected the firſt monaſteries in *Gaul*, and recommended this religious ſolitude with ſuch power and efficacy, both by his inſtructions and his example, that his funeral is ſaid to have been attended by no leſs than

[*q*] Moſt writers, following the opinion of BARONIUS, maintain, that S. ATHANASIUS brought the *monaſtic inſtitution* from *Egypt* into *Italy*, in the year 340, and was the firſt who built a monaſtery at *Rome*. See MABILLONIUS, *Præf. ad Acta Sanctorum Ord. Bened.* tom. i. p. 9. But the learned LEWIS ANT. MURATORI combats this opinion, and pretends that the firſt monaſtery known in Europe, was erected at *Milan*, *Antiq. Italicar. medii ævi*, tom. v. p. 364.—JUST. FONTANINUS, in his *Hiſtoria Litter. Aquileienſ.* p. 155. affirms, that the firſt ſociety of monks was formed at *Aquileia*. None of theſe writers produce unexceptionable evidence for their opinions. If we may give credit to the BALLERINI (*Diſſert.* ii. *ad Zenonem Veronenſem*, p. 115.) the firſt convent of nuns was erected towards the end of this century, at *Verona*, by ZENO, biſhop of that city.

two

two thouſand monks [*r*]. From hence, the monaſtic diſcipline extended, gradually, its progreſs through the other provinces and countries of Europe.

It is, however, proper to obſerve, that there was a great difference in point of auſterity between the weſtern and oriental monks; the former of whom could never be brought to bear the ſevere rules to which the latter voluntarily ſubmitted. And, indeed, the reaſon of this difference may be partly derived from the nature of the reſpective climates in which they dwelt. The European countries abound not ſo much with delirious fanatics, and with perſons of a moroſe and auſtere complexion, as thoſe arid regions that lie towards the burning eaſt; nor are our bodies capable of ſupporting that rigorous and abſtemious method of living, which is familiar and eaſy to thoſe who are placed under a glowing firmament, and breathe in a ſultry and ſcorching atmoſphere. It was, therefore, rather the name only than the thing itſelf, which was tranſported into the European countries [*s*], though this name was, indeed,

[*r*] See SULPIT. SEVER. *De vita Martini*, cap. x. p. 17. edit. Veron. where the method of living, uſed by the Martinian monks, is accurately deſcribed. See alſo *Hiſtoire Litteraire de la France*, tom. i. part II. p. 42.

[*s*] This difference between the *diſcipline* of the eaſtern and weſtern monks, and the cauſe of it, have been ingeniouſly remarked by SULPITIUS SEVERUS, *Dial.* i. *De vita Martini*, p. 65. edit. Veron. where one of the interlocutors, in the dialogue, having mentioned the abſtemious and wretched diet of the Egyptian monks, adds what follows: "Placetne tibi "prandium, faſciculus herbarum et panis dimidius viris "quinque?" To this queſtion the Gaul anſwers, "Facis "tuo more, qui nullam occaſionem omittis, quin nos (*i. e.* "the Gallic monks) edacitatis fatiges. Sed facis inhumanè, "qui nos Gallos homines cogis exemplo Angelorum vivere— "Sed contentus ſit hoc prandio Cyrenenſis ille, cui vel ne"ceſſitas vel natura eſt eſurire: nos, *quod tibi ſæpe teſtatus* "*ſum, Galli ſumus.*" The ſame ſpeaker, in the above-mentioned

CENT. IV. PART II.

indeed, accompanied with a certain reſemblance or diſtant imitation of the monaſtic life inſtituted by ANTONY and others in the eaſt.

Different orders of monks.

XV. The monaſtic order, of which we have been taking a general view, was diſtributed into ſeveral claſſes. It was firſt divided into two diſtinct orders, of which the one received the denomination of Cœnobites, the other that of Eremites. The former lived together in a fixed habitation, and made up one large community under a chief, whom they called *father*, or *abbot*, which ſignifies the ſame thing in the Egyptian language. The latter drew out a wretched life in perfect ſolitude, and were ſcattered here and there in caves, in deſarts, in the hollow of rocks, ſheltered from the wild beaſts only by the cover of a miſerable cottage, in which each one lived ſequeſtered from the reſt of his ſpecies.

Cœnobites and Eremites, or Hermits.

Anachorites.

The Anachorites were yet more exceſſive in the auſterity of their manner of living than the Eremites. They frequented the wildeſt deſarts without either tents or cottages; nouriſhed themſelves with the roots and herbs which grew ſpontaneouſly out of the uncultivated ground; wandered about without having any fixed abode, and repoſing wherever the approach of night happened to find them; and all this, that they might *avoid the view and the ſociety of mortals* [*t*].

tioned dialogue, ch. viii. p. 69, 70. reproaches JEROME with having accuſed the monks of gluttony; and proceeds thus; "Sentio de orientalibus illum potius Monachis, quam "de occidentalibus diſputaſſe. Nam edacitas in Græcis et "Orientalibus gula eſt, IN GALLIS NATURA." It appears, therefore, that, immediately after the introduction of the monaſtic order into Europe, the weſtern differed greatly from the eaſtern monks in their manners and diſcipline, and were, in conſequence of this, accuſed by the latter of voraciouſneſs and gluttony.

[*t*] See SULPIT. SEVER. *Dial.* i. *De vita Martini*, cap. x. p. 80. edit. Veron.

The

The laſt order of monks that come now under conſideration were thoſe wandering fanatics, or rather impoſtors, whom the Egyptians called Sarabaites, who, inſtead of procuring a ſubſiſtence by honeſt induſtry, travelled through various cities and provinces, and gained a maintenance by fictitious miracles, by ſelling relicks to the multitude, and other frauds of a like nature. Sarabaites.

Many of the Cœnobites were chargeable with vicious and ſcandalous practices. This order, however, was not ſo univerſally corrupt as that of the Sarabaites, who were, for the moſt part, profligates of the moſt abandoned kind. As to the Eremites, they ſeem to have deſerved no other reproach than that of a delirious and extravagant fanaticiſm [*u*]. All theſe different orders were hitherto compoſed of the *laity*, and were ſubject to the juriſdiction and the inſpection of the biſhops. But many of them were now adopted among the *clergy*, and that even by the command of the emperors. Nay, the fame of monaſtic piety and ſanctity became ſo univerſal, that biſhops were frequently choſen out of that fanatical order [*w*].

XVI. If the enthuſiaſtic frenzy of the monks exaggerated, in a manner pernicious to the intereſts of morality, the diſcipline that is obligatory upon Chriſtians, the intereſts of virtue and true religion ſuffered yet more grievouſly by two monſtrous errors which were almoſt univerſally Two moſt pernicious maxims adopted in this century.

[*u*] Whoever is deſirous of a fuller account of the vices of the monks in this century, may conſult the above-mentioned dialogue of SULP. SEVER. cap. viii. p. 69, 70. cap. xxi. p. 88. where he particularly chaſtiſes the arrogance and ambition of thoſe of them, who aſpired to *clerical* honours. See alſo *Dial.* ii. cap. viii. p. 112. *Dial.* ii. cap. xv. p. 144, 145. *Conſultat. Apollonii et Zachæi*, publiſhed by DACHERIUS *Spicileg.* tom. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 35.

[*w*] See J. GODOFRED. *ad codicem Theodoſianum*, tom. vi. part I. p. 76. 106. edit. Ritterianæ.

adopted

CENT. IV. PART II.

adopted in this century, and became a ſource of innumerable calamities and miſchiefs in the ſucceeding ages. The firſt of theſe maxims was, that *it was an act of virtue, to deceive and lye, when by that means the intereſts of the church might be promoted*; and the ſecond equally horrible, though in another point of view, was, that *errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after proper admonition, were puniſhable with civil penalties and corporal tortures.* The former of theſe erroneous maxims was now of a long ſtanding; it had been adopted for ſome ages paſt, and had produced an incredible number of ridiculous fables, fictitious prodigies, and pious frauds, to the unſpeakable detriment of that glorious cauſe in which they were employed. And it muſt be frankly confeſſed, that the greateſt men, and moſt eminent ſaints of this century, were more or leſs tainted with the infection of this corrupt principle, as will appear evidently to ſuch as look with an attentive eye into their writings and their actions. We would willingly except from this charge, AMBROSE, and HILARY, AUGUSTIN, GREGORY NAZIANZEN, and JEROME; but truth, which is more reſpectable than theſe venerable fathers, obliges us to involve them in the general accuſation. We may add alſo, that it was, probably, the contagion of this pernicious maxim, that engaged SULPITIUS SEVERUS, who is far from being, in the general, a puerile or credulous hiſtorian, to attribute ſo many miracles to St. MARTIN. The other maxim, relating to the juſtice and expediency of puniſhing error, was introduced with thoſe ſerene and peaceful times which the acceſſion of CONSTANTINE to the imperial throne procured to the church. It was from that period approved by many, enforced by ſeveral examples during the conteſts that aroſe with the Priſcillianiſts and Donatiſts, confirmed

and

and eſtabliſhed by the authority of AUGUSTIN, and thus tranſmitted to the following ages.



XVII. When we caſt an eye towards the lives and morals of Chriſtians at this time, we find, as formerly, a mixture of good and evil; ſome eminent for their piety, others infamous for their crimes. The number, however, of immoral and unworthy Chriſtians began ſo to increaſe, that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare. When the terrors of perſecution were totally diſpelled; when the church, ſecured from the efforts of its enemies, enjoyed the ſweets of proſperity and peace; when the moſt of the biſhops exhibited to their flock the contagious examples of arrogance, luxury, effeminacy, animoſity, and ſtrife, with other vices too numerous to mention; when the inferior rulers and doctors of the church fell into a ſlothful and opprobrious negligence of the duties of their reſpective ſtations, and employed in vain wranglings and idle diſputes, that zeal and attention that were due to the culture of piety and to the inſtruction of their people, and when (to complete the enormity of this horrid detail) multitudes were drawn into the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the proſpect of gain and the fear of puniſhment; then it was, indeed, no wonder that the church was contaminated with ſhoals of profligate Chriſtians, and that the virtuous few were, in a manner, oppreſſed and overwhelmed with the ſuperior numbers of the wicked and licentious. It is true, that the ſame rigorous penitence, which had taken place before CONSTANTINE the GREAT, continued now in full force againſt flagrant tranſgreſſors; but when the reign of corruption becomes univerſal, the vigour of the laws yields to its ſway, and a weak execution defeats the purpoſes of the moſt ſalutary diſcipline. Such was

The lives and morals of Chriſtians.

now

CENT. IV. PART II.

now unhappily the caſe: the age was ſinking daily from one period of corruption to another; the great and the powerful ſinned with impunity; and the obſcure and the indigent felt alone the ſeverity of the laws.

The Meletian controverſy.

XVIII. Religious controverſies among Chriſtians were frequent in this century; and, as it often happens in the courſe of civil affairs, external peace gave occaſion and leiſure for the fomenting inteſtine troubles and diſſenſions. We ſhall mention ſome of the principal of theſe controverſies, which produced violent and obſtinate ſchiſms, not ſo much, indeed, by their natural tendency, as by incidental occurrences.

In the beginning of this century, about the year 306, aroſe the famous Meletian controverſy, ſo called from its author, and which, for a long time, divided the church. PETER, biſhop of *Alexandria*, had depoſed, from the epiſcopal office, MELETIUS, biſhop of *Lycopolis*, in the *Upper Egypt*. The reaſons that occaſioned this violent act of authority have not been ſufficiently expoſed.

The partiſans of PETER allege, that MELETIUS had ſacrificed to the gods, and charge him alſo with various crimes [x]; while others affirm, that his only failing was an exceſſive ſeverity againſt the *lapſed* [y]. Be that as it will, MELETIUS treated the ſentence of PETER with the utmoſt contempt, and did not only continue to perform all the duties of the epiſcopal function, but even aſſumed the right of conſecrating preſbyters; a privilege which, by the laws of *Egypt*, belonged only to the biſhop of *Alexandria*. The

[x] ATHANASIUS, *Apologia ſecunda*, tom. i. opp. p. 777.

[y] EPIPHANIUS, *Hæreſ.* lxviii. tom. i. opp. p. 716; ſee alſo DION. PETAVIUS, *Not. in Epiphanium*, tom. ii. p. 274. SAM. BASNAGII *Exercitat. de rebus ſacris contra Baronium.*

venerable

venerable gravity and eloquence of MELETIUS drew many to his party, and, among others, a conſiderable number of monks adhered to his cauſe. The council of *Nice* made ſeveral ineffectual attempts to heal this breach: the Meletians, on the other hand, whoſe chief aim was to oppoſe the authority of the biſhop of *Alexandria*, joined themſelves to the Arians, who were his irreconcileable enemies. Hence it happened, that a diſpute, which had, for its firſt object, the authority and juriſdiction of the biſhop of *Alexandria*, degenerated, gradually, into a religious controverſy. The Meletian party was yet ſubſiſting in the fifth century [z]. CENT. IV. PART II.

XIX. Some time after this, a certain perſon, named EUSTATHIUS, was the occaſion of great diſorders and diviſions in *Armenia*, *Pontus*, and the neighbouring countries; and was condemned and excommunicated, in conſequence thereof, by the council of *Gangra*, which was held not long after that of *Nice*. Whether this was the ſame EUSTATHIUS, who was biſhop of *Sebaſtia*, in *Armenia*, and the chief of the Semi-arians; or whether the ancient hiſtorians have confounded together two different perſons of the ſame name, is a matter extremely difficult to determine [a]. However that be, the leader of the Euſtathian ſect does not ſeem ſo much chargeable with a corruption of any religious doctrine, as with having ſet up a fanatical form of ſanctity; an extravagant ſyſtem of practical diſcipline, deſtructive of the order and happineſs of ſociety. For he prohibited marriage, the uſe of wine and fleſh, feaſts of charity, and other things of that The Euſtathian troubles.

[z] SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. c. vi. p. 14. THEODORET. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. viii. p. 548.

[a] See SAM. BASNAG. *Annal. Polit. Eccleſ.* tom. ii. p. 840.

CENT. IV. PART II.

nature. He prescribed immediate divorce to those who were joined in wedlock, and is said to have granted to children and servants the liberty of violating the commands of their parents and masters upon pretexts of a religious nature [*b*].

Luciferian divisions.

XX. LUCIFER, bishop of *Cagliari* in *Sardinia*, a man remarkable for his prudence, the austerity of his character, and the steadiness of his resolution and courage, was banished by the emperor CONSTANTIUS, for having defended the Nicene doctrine, concerning the three persons in the Godhead. He broke the bonds of fraternal communion with EUSEBIUS, bishop of *Verceil*, in the year 363, because the latter had consecrated PAULINUS bishop of *Antioch*; and he afterwards separated himself from the whole church, on account of the act of absolution it had passed in favour of those, who, under CONSTANTIUS, had deserted to the Arians [*c*]. It is, at least, certain, that the small tribe that followed this prelate, under the title of Luciferians, avoided scrupulously and obstinately all commerce and fellowship both with those bishops who had declared themselves in favour of the Arians, and with those also who consented to an absolution for such as returned from this desertion, and acknowledged their error; and thus of consequence they dissolved the bonds of their communion with the church in general [*d*]. The Luciferians are

[*b*] SOCRATES, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. xliii. p. 156. SOZOMENUS, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xiv. p. 520. lib. iv. cap. xxiv. p. 581. EPIPHAN. *Hæres.* lxvi. p. 910. PHILOSTURGIUS, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xvi. p. 53. 59. WOLFG. GUNDLING. *Not. ad Concilium Gangrense*, p. 9.

[*c*] RUFIN. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. 30. p. 174. SOCRATES, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. ix. p. 181, &c. See also TILLEMONT, *Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. vii. p. 521. edit. Paris.

[*d*] See in the *works* of SIRMOND, tom. ii. p. 229, &c. *A book of prayers*, addressed to THEODOSIUS by MARCELLINUS and FAUSTINUS, who were Luciferians.

also

alſo ſaid to have entertained erroneous notions concerning the human ſoul, whoſe generation they conſidered as of a carnal nature, and maintained that it was transfuſed from the parents into the children [*e*].

The Ærian controverſy.

XXI. About this time ÆRIUS, a preſbyter, monk, and Semi-arian, erected a new ſect, and excited diviſions throughout *Armenia*, *Pontus*, and *Cappadocia*, by propagating opinions different from thoſe that were commonly received. One of his principal tenets was, that biſhops were not diſtinguiſhed from preſbyters by any divine right; but that, according to the inſtitution of the New Teſtament, their offices and authority were abſolutely the ſame. How far ÆRIUS purſued this opinion, through its natural conſequences, is not certainly known; but we know, with the utmoſt certainty, that it was highly agreeable to many good Chriſtians, who were no longer able to bear the tyranny and arrogance of the biſhops of this century.

There were other things in which ÆRIUS differed from the common notions of the time: he condemned prayers for the dead, ſtated faſts, the celebration of Eaſter, and other rites of that nature, in which the multitude erroneouſly imagine that the life and ſoul of religion conſiſts [*f*]. His great purpoſe ſeems to have been that of reducing Chriſtianity to its primitive ſimplicity; a purpoſe, indeed, laudable and noble when conſidered in itſelf; though the principles from whence it ſprings, and the means by which it is executed, are generally, in many reſpects, worthy

[*e*] AUGUSTIN. *De hæreſ.* cap. lxxxi. with the obſervations of LAMB. DANMÆUS, p. 346.

[*f*] EPIPHANIUS, *Hæreſ.* lxxv. p. 905. AUGUSTIN. *De hæreſ.* cap. liii.

CENT. IV. PART II.

of cenſure, and may have been ſo in the caſe of this reformer [g].

Jovinian.

XXII. The progreſs of ſuperſtition in this century, and the erroneous notions that prevailed concerning the true nature of religion, excited the zeal and the efforts of many to ſtem the torrent. But their labours only expoſed them to infamy and reproach. The moſt eminent of theſe worthy oppoſers of the reigning ſuperſtitions was JOVINIAN, an Italian monk, who, towards the concluſion of this century, taught firſt at *Rome*, and afterwards at *Milan*, that all thoſe who kept the vows they made to CHRIST at their baptiſm, and lived according to thoſe rules of piety and virtue laid down in the goſpel, had an equal title

☞ [g] The deſire of reducing religious worſhip to the greateſt poſſible ſimplicity, however rational it may appear in itſelf, and abſtractedly conſidered, will be conſiderably moderated in ſuch as beſtow a moment's attention upon the imperfection and infirmities of human nature in its preſent ſtate. Mankind, generally ſpeaking, have too little elevation of mind to be much affected with thoſe forms and methods of worſhip, in which there is nothing ſtriking to the outward ſenſes. The great difficulty here lies in determining the lengths, which it is prudent to go in the accommodation of religious ceremonies to human infirmity; and the grand point, is to fix a medium, in which a due regard may be ſhewn to the ſenſes and imagination, without violating the dictates of right reaſon, or tarniſhing the purity of true religion. It has been ſaid, that the Romiſh church has gone too far in its condeſcenſion to the infirmities of mankind. And this is what the ableſt defenders of its motley worſhip have alleged in its behalf. But this obſervation is not juſt: the church of *Rome* has not ſo much accommodated itſelf to *human weakneſs*, as it has abuſed that *weakneſs*, by taking occaſion from it to eſtabliſh an endleſs variety of ridiculous ceremonies, deſtructive of true religion, and only adapted to promote the riches and deſpotiſm of the clergy, and to keep the multitude ſtill hoodwinked in their ignorance and ſuperſtition. How far a juſt antipathy to the church puppet-ſhows of the Papiſts has unjuſtly driven ſome Proteſtant churches into the oppoſite extreme, is a matter that I ſhall not now examine, though it certainly deſerves a ſerious conſideration.

to

to the rewards of futurity; and that, consequently, those who passed their days in unsociable celibacy, and severe mortifications and fastings, were in no respect more acceptable in the eye of God, than those who lived virtuously in the bonds of marriage, and nourished their bodies with moderation and temperance. These judicious opinions, which many began to adopt, were first condemned by the church of *Rome*, and afterwards, by AMBROSE, in a council held at *Milan* in the year 390 [*b*]. The emperor HONORIUS seconded the authoritative proceedings of the bishops by the violence of the secular arm, answered the judicious reasonings of JOVINIAN by the terror of coercive and penal laws, and banished this pretended heretic to the island *Boa*. JOVINIAN published his opinions in a book, against which JEROME, in the following century, wrote a most bitter and abusive treatise, which is still extant [*i*].

Controversies relating to Origen.

XXIII. Among all the religious controversies that divided the church, the most celebrated, both for their importance and their duration, were those relating to ORIGEN and his doctrine.

This illustrious man, though he had been, for a long time, charged with many errors, was held, by the most part of Christians, in the highest veneration, and his name was so sacred as to give weight to the cause in which it appeared. The Arians, who were sagacious in searching for succours on all sides to maintain their sect, affirmed, that ORIGEN had adopted their opinions. In this they were believed by some, who consequently included this great man in the hatred they entertained against the sect of the Arians. But several

[*b*] HIERONYMUS *in Jovinianum*, tom. ii. opp. AUGUSTIN. *De hæres.* cap. lxxxii. AMBROS. *Epist.* vi. &c.

[*i*] *Codex Theodosianus*, tom. iii. p. 218. tom. vi. p. 193.

CENT. IV. PART II.

writers of the firſt learning and note oppoſed this report, and endeavoured to vindicate the honour of their maſter from theſe injurious inſinuations. The moſt eminent of theſe was EUSEBIUS, biſhop of *Cæſarea*, as appears by his learned work, intitled, *An Apology for Origen*. It is extremely probable, that theſe clamours raiſed againſt the memory and reputation of a man, whom the whole Chriſtian world beheld with reſpect, would have been ſoon huſhed, had it not been for the riſe of new commotions, which proceeded from another ſource, and of which we ſhall treat in the following ſection.

The progreſs of theſe controverſies.

XXIV. The monks in general, and the Egyptians monks in particular, were enthuſiaſtically devoted to ORIGEN, and ſpared no labour to propagate his opinions in all places. Their zeal, however, met with oppoſition, nor could they perſuade all Chriſtians of the truth and ſoundneſs of the notions invented or adopted by that eminent writer. Hence aroſe a controverſy concerning the reaſons and foundations of *Origeniſm*, which was at firſt managed in a private manner, but, afterwards, by degrees, broke out into an open flame. Among the numerous partiſans of ORIGEN was JOHN, biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, which furniſhed EPIPHANIUS and JEROME with a pretext to caſt an odium upon this prelate, againſt whom they had been previouſly exaſperated on other accounts. But the ingenious biſhop conducted matters with ſuch admirable dexterity, that, in defending himſelf, he vindicated, at the ſame time, the reputation of ORIGEN, and drew to his party the whole monaſtic body; and alſo a prodigious number of thoſe who were ſpectators of this intereſting combat. This was but the beginning of the vehement conteſts concerning the doctrine of ORIGEN, that were carried on both in the eaſtern and weſtern provinces. Theſe conteſts were

were particularly fomented in the weſt by RUFINUS, a preſbyter of *Aquileia*, who tranſlated into Latin ſeveral books of ORIGEN, and inſinuated, with ſufficient plainneſs, that he acquieſced in the ſentiments they contained [*k*], which drew upon him the implacable rage of the learned and choleric JEROME. But theſe commotions ſeemed to ceaſe in the weſt after the death of RUFINUS, and the efforts which men of the firſt order made to check, both by their authority and by their writings, the progreſs of *Origeniſm* in thoſe parts.

Controverſy in the eaſt, concerning the writings of Origen.

XXV. The troubles which the writings and doctrines of ORIGEN excited in the eaſt were more grievous and laſting. THEOPHILUS, biſhop of *Alexandria*, irritated, for ſeveral reaſons, againſt the Nitrian monks, repreſented them as infected with the contagion of *Origeniſm*, and ordered them to give up and abandon all the productions of ORIGEN. The monks refuſed obedience to this command, and alleged in their defence two conſiderations; the one, that the paſſages in the writings of this holy and venerable man, which ſeemed to ſwerve from the truth, were inſerted in them by ill-deſigning heretics; and the other, that a few things worthy of cenſure were not ſufficient to juſtify the condemnation of the reſt. Matters were but more exaſperated by this refuſal of ſubmiſſion to the order of THEOPHILUS; for this violent prelate called a council, at *Alexandria*, in the year 399, in which, having condemned the followers of ORIGEN, he ſent a band of ſoldiers to drive the monks from their reſidence on mount *Nitria*. The poor monks, ſcattered abroad thus by an armed force, fled firſt to *Jeruſalem*, from whence they retired afterwards to *Scythopolis*; and, finding that they could live here in ſecurity and

[*k*] See JUST. FONTANINUS, *Hiſtoria Litterar. Aquileienſis*, lib. iv. cap. iii. p. 177, &c.

CENT. IV. PART II.

peace, determined, at length, to ſet ſail for *Conſtantinople*, and there plead their cauſe in preſence of the emperor [*l*]. The iſſue of theſe proceedings comes under the hiſtory of the following century.

It is, however, neceſſary to obſerve here, that we muſt not reduce to the ſame claſs all thoſe who are called Origeniſts in the records of this century. For this ambiguous title is applied to perſons who differed widely in their religious notions. Sometimes it merely ſignifies ſuch friends of ORIGEN, as acknowledged his writings to have been adulterated in many places, and who were far from patronizing the errors of which he was accuſed; in other places, this title is attributed to thoſe who confeſs ORIGEN to be the author of the doctrines which are imputed to him, and who reſolutely ſupport and defend his opinions; of which latter there was a conſiderable number among the monaſtic orders.

## CHAP. IV.

### *Concerning the rites and ceremonies uſed in the church during this century.*

A multitude of ceremonies introduced.

I. WHILE the Roman emperors were ſtudious to promote the honour of Chriſtianity, by the auſpicious protection they afforded to the church, and their moſt zealous efforts to advance its intereſts, the inconſiderate and ill-directed piety of the biſhops caſt a cloud over the beauty and ſimplicity of the goſpel, by the pro-

[*l*] See PETER. DANIEL HUET, *Origenianorum*, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 196. LOUIS DOUCIN, *Hiſtoire de Origeniſme*, livr. iii. p. 95. HIER. a PRATO, *Diſſ.* vi. *in Sulpitium Severum de Monachis ob Origenis nomen ex Nitria totaque Ægypto pulſis*, p. 273. Veron. 1741, folio.

digious

digious number of rites and ceremonies which they had invented to embelliſh it. And here we may apply that well-known ſaying of AUGUSTIN [*m*], that *the yoke under which the Jews formerly groaned, was more tolerable than that impoſed upon many Chriſtians in his time.* The rites and inſtitutions, by which the Greeks, Romans, and other nations, had formerly teſtified their religious veneration for fictitious deities, were now adopted, with ſome ſlight alterations, by Chriſtian biſhops, and employed in the ſervice of the true God. We have already mentioned the reaſons alleged for this imitation, ſo proper to diſguſt all who have a juſt ſenſe of the native beauty of genuine Chriſtianity. Theſe fervent heralds of the goſpel, whoſe zeal outrun their candour and ingenuity, imagined that the nations would receive Chriſtianity with more facility, when they ſaw the rites and ceremonies to which they were accuſtomed, adopted in the church, and the ſame worſhip paid to CHRIST and his martyrs, which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened, that, in theſe times, the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little, in its external appearance, from that of the Chriſtians. They had both a moſt pompous and ſplendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax-tapers, croſiers [*n*], proceſſions [*o*],

[*m*] AUGUSTIN. *Epiſt.* cxix. *ad Januarium*, according to the ancient diviſion.

☞ [*n*] The *Lituus*, which, among the ancient Romans, was the chief enſign of the augurs, and which derived its name from its reſemblance of the *military trumpet*, became a mark of epiſcopal dignity. We call it the *croſier*, or biſhop's ſtaff.

☞ [*o*] The word *ſupplicationes*, which I have rendered by that of *proceſſions*, ſignified, among the Pagans, thoſe ſolemn and public acts of *gratitude* for national bleſſings, or *deprecation* of national calamities, which were expreſſed by the whole body of the people by a religious approach to the temples of the gods, which, by a decree of the ſenate, were open for all without diſtinction. See *Cic. Catil.* iii. 6. Liv. x. 23.

CENT. IV. PART II.

luſtrations, images, gold and ſilver vaſes, and many ſuch circumſtances of pageantry, were equally to be ſeen in the heathen temples and the Chriſtian churches.

Magnificent churches erected.

II. No ſooner had CONSTANTINE the GREAT aboliſhed the ſuperſtitions of his anceſtors, than magnificent churches were every where erected for the Chriſtians, which were richly adorned with pictures and images, and bore a ſtriking reſemblance of the Pagan temples, both in their outward and inward form [*p*]. Of theſe churches ſome were built over the tombs of martyrs, and were frequented only at ſtated times; while others were ſet apart for the ordinary aſſemblies of Chriſtians in divine worſhip. The former were called Martyria, from the places where they were erected; and the latter Tituli [*q*]. Both of them were conſecrated with great pomp, and with certain rites borrowed, moſtly, from the ancient laws of the Roman pontifs.

Origin of the right of patronage.

But our wonder will not ceaſe here; it will rather be augmented when we learn, that, at this time, it was looked upon as an eſſential part of religion to have, in every country, a multitude

[*p*] See EZEK. SPANHEIM, *Preuves ſur les Ceſars de Julien*, p. 47. and particularly LE BRUN's *Explication litteraire et hiſtorique des Ceremonies de la Meſſe*, tom. ii. p. 101. A deſcription of theſe churches may be found in EUSEBIUS, *De vita Conſtantini M.* lib. iii. cap. xxxv. and an exact plan of the interior ſtructure of them is accurately engraved in biſhop BEVEREGE's *Adnotationes in Pandectas Canonum*, tom. ii. p. 70. and in FREDERICK SPANHEIM's *Inſtitut. Hiſt. Eccleſ.* tom. i. opp. p. 860. It muſt alſo be obſerved, that certain parts of the Chriſtian churches were formed after the model of the Jewiſh temples. See CAMP. VITRINGA, *De ſynagoga vetera*, lib. iii. p. 466.

[*q*] Jo. MABILLON. *Muſei Italici*, tom. ii. *in Comment. ad ordin. Roman.* p. xvi. ☞ The *Tituli* were the ſmaller churches, ſo called from this circumſtance, that the preſbyters, who officiated in them, were called by the names of the places where they were erected, *i. e.* received titles, which fixed them to thoſe particular cures.

of churches; and here we muſt look for the true origin of what is called the *right of patronage*, which was introduced among Chriſtians with no other view than to encourage the opulent to erect a great number of churches, by giving them the privilege of appointing the miniſters that were to officiate in them [r]. This was a new inſtance of that ſervile imitation of the ancient ſuperſtitions which reigned at this time; for it was a very common notion among the people of old, that nations and provinces were happy and free from danger, in proportion to the number of fanes and temples, which they conſecrated to the worſhip of gods and heroes, whoſe protection and ſuccour could not fail, as it was thought, to be ſhed abundantly upon thoſe, who worſhipped them with ſuch zeal, and honoured them with ſo many marks of veneration and reſpect. The Chriſtians unhappily contracted the ſame erroneous way of thinking. The greater the number of temples was, which they erected in honour of CHRIST, and his choſen friends and followers, the more ſanguine did their expectations grow of powerful ſuccours from them, and of a peculiar intereſt in the divine protection. They were ſo weak as to imagine, that GOD, CHRIST, and celeſtial intelligences, were delighted with thoſe marks and teſtimonies of reſpect, which captivate the hearts of wretched mortals.

III. The Chriſtian worſhip conſiſted in hymns, prayers, the reading of the ſcriptures, a diſcourſe addreſſed to the people, and concluded with the celebration of the Lord's ſupper. To theſe were added various rites, more adapted to pleaſe the eyes, and ſtrike the imagination, than to kindle in the heart the pure and ſacred flame of genuine

The form of public worſhip.

[r] JUST. HENN. BÖHMERI *Jus Eccleſ. Proteſtant.* tom. iii. p. 466. *Bibliotheque Italique*, tom. v. p. 166.

piety,

CENT. IV. PART II.

piety [*s*]. We are not however to think, that the ſame method of worſhip was uniformly followed in every Chriſtian ſociety, for this was far from being the caſe. Every biſhop, conſulting his own private judgment, and taking into conſideration the nature of the times, the genius of the country in which he lived, and the character and temper of thoſe whom he was appointed to rule and inſtruct, formed ſuch a plan of divine worſhip as he thought the wiſeſt and the beſt. Hence that variety of *liturgies* which were in uſe, before the biſhop of *Rome* had uſurped the ſupreme power in religious matters, and perſuaded the credulous and unthinking, that the model both of doctrine and worſhip was to be given by the mother-church, and to be followed implicitly throughout the Chriſtian world.

Changes introduced into many parts of divine worſhip.

IV. It would be almoſt endleſs to enter into a minute detail of all the different parts of public worſhip, and to point out the diſadvantageous changes they underwent. A few obſervations will be ſufficient upon this head. The public prayers had now loſt much of that ſolemn and majeſtic ſimplicity, that characteriſed them in the primitive times, and which were, at preſent, degenerating into a vain and ſwelling bombaſt. The pſalms of *David* were now received among the public hymns that were ſung as a part of divine ſervice [*t*]. The ſermons, or public diſcourſes addreſſed to the people, were compoſed according to the rules of human eloquence, and rather

[*r*] For a full account of the form of public worſhip, or the *liturgies* of this century, the reader will do well to conſult the 22d *catechetical diſcourſe of* CYRIL of *Jeruſalem*, and the *apoſtolical conſtitutions*, which are falſely attributed to CLEMENT of *Rome*. Theſe writers are moſt learnedly illuſtrated and explained by PETER LE BRUN, in his *Explication litterale et hiſtorique de la Meſſe*, tom. ii. p. 53.

[*s*] BEAUSOBRE, *Hiſt. du Manicheiſme*, tom. ii. p. 614.

adapted

adapted to excite the ſtupid admiration of the populace, who delight in vain embelliſhments, than to enlighten the underſtanding, or to reform the heart. Nay, it would ſeem as if all poſſible means had been induſtriouſly uſed, to give an air of folly and extravagance to the Chriſtian aſſemblies. For the people were permitted, nay, even exhorted by the preacher himſelf, to crown his talents with clapping of hands and loud acclamations of applauſe [*u*]; a recompence that was hitherto peculiar to the actors on the theatre, and the orators in the forum. How men, ſet apart by their profeſſion to exhibit examples of the contempt of vain glory, and to demonſtrate to others the vanity and emptineſs of all temporal things, could indulge ſuch a ſenſeleſs and indecent ambition, is difficult to be conceived, though it is highly to be deplored.

Feſtivals, or holidays.

V. The firſt day of the week, which was the ordinary and ſtated time for the public aſſemblies of Chriſtians, was, in conſequence of a peculiar law enacted by CONSTANTINE, obſerved with more ſolemnity than it had formerly been [*w*]. The feſtivals celebrated in moſt of the Chriſtian churches, were five in number, and were appointed in commemoration of the birth, the ſufferings and death, the reſurrection and the aſcenſion, of the divine Saviour; and alſo the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon the apoſtles and firſt heralds of the goſpel on the day of Pentecoſt. Of theſe feſtivals, none were kept with ſo much ſolemnity and reſpect as the XIV days that were appointed for the commemoration of CHRIST's reſurrection [*x*].

[*u*] FRANC. BERNH. FERRARIUS, *De veterum acclamationibus & plauſu*, p. 66.

[*w*] JAC. GODOFRED. *ad codicem Theodoſ.* tom. i. p. 135.

[*x*] Ibid. tom. i. p. 143.

The

The eaſtern Chriſtians celebrated the memory of CHRIST's birth and baptiſm in one feſtival, which was fixed on the ſixth of January, and this day was by them called the *Epiphany*, as on it the immortal Saviour was manifeſted to the world [*y*]. On the other hand, the Chriſtians of the weſt ſeem to have always celebrated the birth of our Lord on the xxvth of December: for there appears to be very little certainty in the accounts of thoſe, who allege that the Roman pontif, JULIUS I. removed the feſtival of CHRIST's birth from the ſixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December [*z*].

The unlucky ſucceſs which ſome had in diſcovering the carcaſſes and remains of certain holy men, multiplied the *feſtivals* and *commemorations of the martyrs* in the moſt extravagant manner. The increaſe of theſe feſtivals would not have been offenſive to the wiſe and the good, if Chriſtians had employed the time they took up, in promoting their ſpiritual intereſts, and in forming habits of ſanctity and virtue. But the contrary happened: theſe days, which were ſet apart for pious exerciſes, were ſquandered away in indolence, voluptuouſneſs, and criminal purſuits, and were leſs conſecrated to the ſervice of God, than employed in the indulgence of ſinful paſſions. It is well known, among other things, what opportunities of ſinning were offered to the licentious, by what were called the vigils of Eaſter and Whitſuntide, or Pentecoſt.

Faſting.

VI. *Faſting* was conſidered, in this century, as the moſt effectual and powerful means of repelling the force, and diſconcerting the ſtratagems of evil

[*y*] BEAUSOBRE, *Hiſt. du Manicheiſme*, tom. ii. p. 693.
[*z*] See Jos. SIM. ASSEMANN. *Biblioth. Orient. Clement. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 168. ALPH. DES VIGNOLES, *Diſſ. dans la Bibliotheque Germanique*, tom. ii. p. 29.

ſpirits,

ſpirits, and of appeaſing the anger of an offended Deity. Hence we may eaſily underſtand what induced the rulers of the church to eſtabliſh this cuſtom by expreſs laws, and to impoſe, as an indiſpenſable duty, an act of humiliation; the obſervation of which had hitherto been left to every one's choice. The *Quadrageſimal*, or *Lent-faſt*, was held more ſacred than all the reſt, though it was not as yet confined to a fixed number of days [*a*]. We muſt however remark, that the *faſts* obſerved in this century, were very different from thoſe that were ſolemnized in the preceding times. Formerly thoſe who ſubmitted themſelves to the diſcipline of faſting abſtained wholly from meat and drink; but now a mere abſtinence from fleſh and wine was, by many, judged ſufficient for the purpoſes of faſting [*b*], and this latter opinion prevailed, from this time, and became univerſal among the Latins.

The adminiſtration of baptiſm.

VII. *Baptiſmal* fonts were now erected in the porch of each church, for the more commodious adminiſtration of that initiating ſacrament. *Baptiſm* was adminiſtered during the vigils of Eaſter and Whitſuntide, with lighted tapers, by the biſhop, and the preſbyters commiſſioned by him for that purpoſe. In caſes however of urgent neceſſity, and in ſuch only, a diſpenſation was granted for performing this ſacred rite at other times than thoſe now mentioned. In ſome places *ſalt* was employed, as a ſymbol of purity and wiſdom, and was thrown, with this view, into the mouth of the perſon baptized; and a *double unction* was every where uſed in the celebration of this ordinance, one preceding its adminiſtration, and the other following it. The perſons who were admitted into the church by baptiſm were

[*a*] Jo. DALLÆUS, *De Jejuniis et Quadrageſima*, lib. iv.
[*b*] See BARBEYRAC, *De la Morale des Peres*, p. 250.

obliged,

obliged, after the celebration of that holy ordinance, to go clothed in white garments during the ſpace of ſeven days.

Many other rites and ceremonies might be mentioned here; but, as they neither acquired ſtability by their duration, nor received the ſanction of univerſal approbation and conſent, we ſhall paſs them over in ſilence.

and of the Lord's ſupper.

VIII. The inſtitution of *catechumens*, and the diſcipline through which they paſſed, ſuffered no variation in this century, but continued ſtill upon its ancient footing. It appears farther, by innumerable teſtimonies, that the Lord's ſupper was adminiſtered (in ſome places two or three times a-week, in others on Sunday only) to all thoſe who were aſſembled together to worſhip God. It was alſo ſometimes celebrated at the tombs of martyrs and at funerals, which cuſtom, undoubtedly, gave riſe to the *maſſes*, that were afterwards performed in honour of the ſaints, and for the benefit of the dead. In many places, the bread and wine were held up to view before their diſtribution, that they might be ſeen by the people, and contemplated with a certain religious reſpect; and hence, not long after, the *adoration of the ſymbols* was unqueſtionably derived. Neither *catechumens*, *penitents*, nor thoſe who were ſuppoſed to be under the influence and impulſe of evil ſpirits, were admitted to this holy ordinance; nor did the ſacred orators in their public diſcourſes ever dare to unfold its true and genuine nature with freedom and ſimplicity. The reaſon of thus concealing it from the knowledge and obſervation of many, was a very mean and ſhameful one, as we have already obſerved: many, indeed, offer a much more decent and ſatisfactory argument in favour of this cuſtom, when they allege, that by theſe *myſterious* proceedings, the deſire of the *catechumens* would naturally burn to penetrate, as

ſoon

ſoon as was poſſible, the ſublime ſecret, and that they would thereby be animated to prepare themſelves with double diligence for receiving this privilege.



## CHAP. V.

### *Concerning the diviſions and hereſies that troubled the church during this century.*

I. THE ſects which had ſprung up in the preceding ages, tranſmitted their contagious principles to this century. Many of them remained yet, particularly in the eaſt, and, notwithſtanding their abſurdity, continued to attract a certain number of followers. The Manichean faction ſurpaſſed the reſt in its influence and progreſs. The very turpitude and enormity of its doctrines ſeemed to ſeduce many into its ſnares; and, what is ſtill more ſurprizing, men of genius and penetration were deluded by its enchantments, as the example of AUGUSTIN ſufficiently teſtifies. It is true, the wiſeſt and moſt learned writers of the times, and among others AUGUSTIN, when he returned from his errors, endeavoured to oppoſe the growth of this ſpreading peſtilence; nor were their efforts entirely unſucceſsful. But the root of this horrible diſeaſe was deep; and neither the force of argument, nor the ſeverity of the moſt rigorous laws, were ſufficient to extirpate it thoroughly [*c*]. For ſome time indeed

The remains of the ancient ſects.

[*c*] The ſevere laws enacted by the emperors againſt the Manicheans, are to be found in the *Theodoſian Code*, vol. vi. part I. edit. Ritterian. In the year 372, VALENTINIAN the elder prohibited their aſſemblies, and impoſed heavy penalties on their doctors, p. 126. In 381, THEODOSIUS the GREAT branded them with infamy, and deprived them of all the

CENT. IV. PART II.

indeed it ſeemed to diſappear, and many thought it utterly eradicated; but it gathered force ſecretly, and broke out afterwards with new violence. To avoid the ſeverity of the laws, the Manicheans concealed themſelves under a variety of names, which they adopted ſucceſſively, and changed, in proportion as they were diſcovered under them. Thus they aſſumed the names of Encratites, Apotactics, Saccophori, Hydroparaſtates, Solitaries, and ſeveral others, under which they lay concealed for a certain time, but could not however long eſcape the vigilance of their enemies [*d*].

The riſe of the controverſy with the Donatiſts.

II. The ſtate had little danger to apprehend from a ſect, which the force of ſevere laws and of penal reſtraints could not fail to undermine, gradually, throughout the Roman empire. But a new and much more formidable faction ſtarted up in *Africa*, which, though it aroſe from ſmall beginnings, afflicted moſt grievouſly both church and ſtate for more than a century. Its origin was as follows:

MENSURIUS, biſhop of *Carthage*, in *Africa*, dying in the year 311, the greateſt part of the clergy and people choſe, in his place, the archdeacon CÆCILIANUS, who, without waiting for the aſſembly of the Numidian biſhops, was conſecrated by thoſe of Africa alone. This haſty proceeding was the occaſion of much trouble. The Numidian biſhops, who had always been preſent at the conſecration of the biſhops of *Carthage*, were highly offended at their being excluded from this ſolemn ceremony, and, aſſembling themſelves at *Carthage*, called CÆCILIANUS before them, to give an ac-

rights and privileges of citizens, p. 133. Add to theſe many edicts more dreadful, which may be ſeen in pages 137, 138. 170. of the above-mentioned work.

[*d*] See the law of THEODOSIUS, *Codex Theod.* tom. vi. p. 134. 136, 137, 138.

count

count of his conduct. The flame, thus kindled, was greatly augmented by certain Carthaginian preſbyters, who were competitors with CÆCILIANUS, particularly BOTRUS and CELESIUS. LUCILLA, alſo, an opulent lady, who had been reprimanded by CÆCILIANUS for her ſuperſtitious practices, and had conceived againſt him a bitter enmity on that account, was active in exaſperating the ſpirits of his adverſaries, and diſtributed a large ſum of money among the Numidians to encourage them in their oppoſition to the new biſhop. In conſequence of all this, CÆCILIANUS, refuſing to ſubmit to the judgment of the Numidians, was condemned in a council, aſſembled by SECUNDUS, biſhop of *Tigiſis*, conſiſting of ſeventy prelates, who, with the conſent of a conſiderable part of the clergy and people, declared him unworthy of the epiſcopal dignity, and choſe his deacon MAJORINUS for his ſucceſſor. By this proceeding, the Carthaginian church was divided into two factions, and groaned under the conteſts of two rival biſhops, CÆCILIANUS and MAJORINUS.

Cæcilianus condemned.

III. The Numidians alleged two important reaſons to juſtify their ſentence againſt CÆCILIANUS; as *firſt*, that FELIX of *Aptungus*, the chief of the biſhops, who aſſiſted at his conſecration, was a *traditor* (*i. e.* one of thoſe who, during the perſecution under DIOCLETIAN, had delivered the ſacred writings and the pious books of the Chriſtians to the magiſtrates in order to be burnt); and that having thus apoſtatized from the ſervice of CHRIST, it was not poſſible that he could impart the Holy Ghoſt to the new biſhop. A *ſecond* reaſon for their ſentence againſt CÆCILIANUS was drawn from the harſhneſs and even cruelty that he had diſcovered in his conduct, while he was a deacon, towards the Chriſtian confeſſors and martyrs during the perſecution above-mentioned, whom

The reaſons alleged for his condemnation.

he abandoned, in the moſt mercileſs manner, to all the extremities of hunger and want, leaving them without food in their priſons, and hindering thoſe, who were willing to ſuccour them, from bringing them relief. To theſe accuſations they added the inſolent contumacy of the new prelate, who refuſed to obey their ſummons, and to appear before them in council to juſtify his conduct.

There was none of the Numidians who oppoſed CÆCILIANUS with ſuch bitterneſs and vehemence, as DONATUS biſhop of *Caſæ nigræ*, and hence the whole faction was called after him, as moſt writers think; though ſome are of opinion, that they derived this name from another DONATUS, whom the Donatiſts ſurnamed the GREAT [*e*]. This controverſy, in a ſhort time, ſpread far and wide, not only throughout *Numidia*, but even through all the provinces of *Africa*, which entered ſo zealouſly into this eccleſiaſtical war, that in moſt cities there were two biſhops, one at the head of CÆCILIANUS's party, and the other acknowledged by the followers of MAJORINUS.

History of the Donatiſts.

IV. The Donatiſts having brought this controverſy before CONSTANTINE the GREAT, that emperor, in the year 313, appointed MELCHIADES, biſhop of *Rome*, to examine the matter, and named three biſhops of *Gaul* to aſſiſt him in this inquiry. The reſult of this examination was favourable to CÆCILIANUS, who was entirely acquitted of the

[*e*] In the faction of the Donatiſts, there were two eminent perſons of the name of DONATUS; the one was a Numidian, and biſhop of *Caſæ nigræ*; the other ſucceeded MAJORINUS, biſhop of *Carthage*, as leader of the Donatiſts, and received from his ſect, on account of his learning and virtue, the title of DONATUS the GREAT. Hence it has been a queſtion among the learned, from which of theſe the ſect derived its name? The arguments that ſupport the different ſides of this trivial queſtion are nearly of equal force; and why may we not decide it by ſuppoſing that the Donatiſts were ſo called from them both?

crimes

crimes laid to his charge; but the accuſations that had been brought againſt FELIX of *Aptungus*, by whom he was conſecrated, were left out of the queſtion. Hence it was, that the emperor, in the year 314, ordered the cauſe of FELIX to be examined ſeparately by ÆLIAN, proconſul of *Africa*, by whoſe deciſion he was abſolved. The Donatiſts, whoſe cauſe ſuffered neceſſarily by theſe proceedings, complained much of the judgment pronounced by MELCHIADES and ÆLIAN. The ſmall number of biſhops, that had been appointed to examine their cauſe jointly with MELCHIADES, excited, in a particular manner, their reproaches, and even their contempt. They looked upon the deciſion of ſeventy venerable Numidian prelates, as infinitely more reſpectable than that pronounced by nineteen biſhops (for ſuch was the number aſſembled at [*f*] *Rome*), who, beſides the inferiority of their number, were not ſufficiently acquainted with the African affairs to be competent judges in the preſent queſtion. The indulgent emperor, willing to remove theſe ſpecious complaints, ordered a ſecond and a much more numerous aſſembly to meet at *Arles* in the year 314, compoſed of biſhops from various provinces, from *Italy*, *Gaul*, *Germany*, and *Spain*. Here again the Donatiſts loſt their cauſe, but renewed their efforts by appealing to the immediate judgment of the emperor, who condeſcended ſo far, as to admit their appeal; and, in conſequence thereof, examined the whole affair himſelf in the year 316 at *Milan*, in preſence of the contending parties.

☞ [*f*] The emperor, in his letter to MELCHIADES, named no more than three prelates, *viz.* MATERNUS, RHETICIUS, and MARINUS, biſhops of *Cologn*, *Autun*, and *Arles*, to ſit with him as judges of this controverſy; but afterwards he ordered ſeven more to be added to the number, and as many as could ſoon and conveniently aſſemble; ſo that they were at laſt nineteen in all.

CENT. IV. PART II.

The iſſue of this third trial was more favourable to the Donatiſts than that of the two preceding councils, whoſe deciſions the emperor confirmed by the ſentence he pronounced [g]. Hence this perverſe ſect loaded CONSTANTINE with the bittereſt reproaches, and maliciouſly complained that OSIUS, biſhop of *Cordoua*, who was honoured with his friendſhip, and was intimately connected with CÆCILIANUS, had, by corrupt inſinuations, engaged him to pronounce an unrighteous ſentence. The emperor, animated with a juſt indignation at ſuch odious proceedings, deprived the Donatiſts of their churches in *Africa*, and ſent into baniſhment their ſeditious biſhops. Nay, he carried his reſentment ſo far as to put ſome of them to death, probably on account of the intolerable petulance and malignity they diſcovered both in their writings and in their diſcourſe. Hence aroſe violent commotions and tumults in *Africa*, as the ſect of the Donatiſts was extremely powerful and numerous there. The emperor endeavoured, by embaſſies and negotiations, to allay theſe diſturbances, but his efforts were without effect.

The origin of the Circumcelliones.

V. Theſe unhappy commotions gave riſe, no doubt, to a horrible confederacy of deſperate ruffians, who paſſed under the name of Circumcelliones. This furious, fearleſs, and bloody ſet of men, compoſed of the rough and ſavage populace, who embraced the party of the Donatiſts, maintained their cauſe by the force of arms, and,

[g] The proofs of the ſupreme power of the emperors, in religious matters, appear ſo inconteſtable in this controverſy, that it is amazing it ſhould ever have been called in queſtion. Certain it is, that, at this time, the notion of a ſupreme judge ſet over the church univerſal, by the appointment of CHRIST, never had entered into any one's head. The aſſemblies of the clergy at *Rome* and *Arles* are commonly called *councils:* but improperly, ſince, in reality, they were nothing more than meetings of judges, or *commiſſaries* appointed by the emperor.

over-

over-running all *Africa*, filled that province with ſlaughter and rapine, and committed the moſt enormous acts of perfidy and cruelty againſt the followers of CÆCILIANUS. This outrageous multitude, whom no proſpect of ſufferings could terrify, and who, upon urgent occaſions, faced death itſelf with the moſt audacious temerity, contributed to render the ſect of the Donatiſts an object of the utmoſt abhorrence; though it cannot be made appear from any records of undoubted authority, that the biſhops of that faction, thoſe, at leaſt, who had any reputation for piety and virtue, either approved the proceedings, or ſtirred up the violence of this odious rabble. In the mean time, the flame of diſcord gathered ſtrength daily, and ſeemed to portend the approaching horrors of a civil war; to prevent which, CONSTANTINE having tried, in vain, every other method of accommodation, aboliſhed at laſt, by the advice of the governors of *Africa*, the laws that had been enacted againſt the Donatiſts, and allowed the people a full liberty of adhering to the party they liked the beſt.

They are defeated.

VI. After the death of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, his ſon CONSTANS, to whom *Africa* was allotted in the diviſion of the empire, ſent MACARIUS and PAULUS into that province, with a view to heal this deplorable ſchiſm, and to engage the Donatiſts to conclude a peace. DONATUS, ſurnamed the GREAT, the principal biſhop of that ſect, oppoſed all methods of reconciliation with the utmoſt vehemence, and his example was followed by the other prelates of the party. The Circumcelliones alſo continued to ſupport the cauſe of the Donatiſts by aſſaſſinations and maſſacres, executed with the moſt unrelenting fury. They were, however, ſtopt in their career, and were defeated by MACARIUS at the battle of *Bagnia*. Upon this, the affairs of the Donatiſts declined apace; and

CENT. IV. PART II.

MACARIUS uſed no longer the ſoft voice of perſuaſion to engage them to an accommodation, but employed his authority for that purpoſe. A few ſubmitted; the greateſt part ſaved themſelves by flight; numbers were ſent into baniſhment, among whom was DONATUS the GREAT; and many of them were puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity. During theſe troubles, which continued near thirteen years, ſeveral ſteps were taken againſt the Donatiſts, which the equitable and impartial will be at a loſs to reconcile with the dictates of humanity and juſtice; nor, indeed, do the Catholics themſelves deny the truth of this aſſertion [*b*]. And hence the complaints which the Donatiſts made of the cruelty of their adverſaries [*i*].

The ſtate of the Donatiſts, under the emperors Julian and Gratian.

VII. The emperor JULIAN, upon his acceſſion to the throne in the year 362, permitted the exiled Donatiſts to return to their country, and reſtored them to the enjoyment of their former liberty. This ſtep renewed the vigour of that expiring ſect, who, on their return from baniſhment, brought over, in a ſhort time, the greateſt part of the province of *Africa* to eſpouſe their intereſts. GRATIAN, indeed, publiſhed ſeveral edicts againſt them, and, in the year 377, deprived them of their churches, and prohibited all their

[*b*] The teſtimony of OPTATUS of *Mileve* is beyond exception in this matter; it is quoted from the third book of his treatiſe, *De Schiſmate Donatiſtarum*, § 1. and runs thus: "Ab Operariis Unitatis (*i. e.* the emperor's ambaſſadors "MACARIUS and PAULUS) multa quidem aſperè geſta ſunt.— "Fugerunt omnes Epiſcopi cum clericis ſuis, aliqui ſunt mor- "tui: qui fortiores fuerunt, capti & longe relegati ſunt." OPTATUS, through the whole of this work, endeavours to excuſe the ſeverities committed againſt the Donatiſts, of which he lays the principal fault upon that ſect itſelf, confeſſing, however, that, in ſome inſtances, the proceedings againſt them were too rigorous to deſerve approbation, or admit of an excuſe.

[*i*] See *Collat. Carthag. diei tertiæ*, § 258. at the end of OPTATUS, p. 315.

aſſemblies

aſſemblies public and private. But the fury of the Circumcelliones, who may be conſidered as the ſoldiery of the Donatiſts, and the apprehenſion of inteſtine tumults, prevented, no doubt, the vigorous execution of theſe laws. This appears from the number of churches which this people had in *Africa* towards the concluſion of this century, and which were ſerved by no leſs than four hundred biſhops. Two things, however, diminiſhed conſiderably the power and luſtre of this flouriſhing ſect, and made it decline apace about the end of this century: the one was a violent diviſion that aroſe among them, on account of a perſon named MAXIMIN; and this diviſion, ſo proper to weaken the common cauſe, was the moſt effectual inſtrument the Catholics could uſe to combat the Donatiſts. But a ſecond circumſtance which precipitated their decline, was the zealous and fervent oppoſition of AUGUSTIN, firſt preſbyter, and afterwards biſhop, of *Hippo*. This learned and ingenious prelate attacked the Donatiſts in every way. In his writings, in his public diſcourſes, and in his private converſation, he expoſed the dangerous and ſeditious principles of this ſect in the ſtrongeſt manner; and as he was of a warm and active ſpirit, he animated againſt them not only the province of *Africa*, but alſo the whole Chriſtian world, and the imperial court.

The principal crime of the Donatiſts.

VIII. The doctrine of the Donatiſts was conformable to that of the church, as even their adverſaries confeſs; nor were their lives leſs exemplary than thoſe of other Chriſtian ſocieties, if we except the enormous conduct of the Circumcelliones, which the greateſt part of the ſect regarded with the utmoſt deteſtation and abhorrence. The crime, therefore, of the Donatiſts lay properly in the following things; in their declaring the church of *Africa*, which adhered to CÆCILIANUS, fallen from the dignity and privileges

leges of a true church, and deprived of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, on account of the offences with which the new biſhop, and FELIX of *Aptungus*, who had conſecrated him, were charged; in their pronouncing all the churches, who held communion with that of *Africa*, corrupt and polluted; in maintaining that the ſanctity of their biſhops gave their community alone a full right to be conſidered as the true, the pure, and holy church; and in their avoiding all communication with other churches, from an apprehenſion of contracting their impurity and corruption. This erroneous principle was the ſource of that moſt ſhocking uncharitableneſs and preſumption that appeared in their conduct to other churches. Hence they pronounced the ſacred rites and inſtitutions void of all virtue and efficacy among thoſe Chriſtians who were not preciſely of their ſentiments, and not only re-baptiſed thoſe who came over to their party from other churches, but even with reſpect to thoſe who had been ordained miniſters of the goſpel, they obſerved the ſevere cuſtom either of depriving them of their office, or obliging them to be ordained a ſecond time. This ſchiſmatic peſtilence was almoſt wholly confined to *Africa*: for the few pitiful aſſemblies, which the Donatiſts had formed in *Spain* and *Italy*, had neither ſtability nor duration [*k*].

[*k*] A more ample account of the Donatiſts will be found in the following writers: HENR. VALESIUS, *Diſſert. de Schiſmate Donatiſtarum.* This diſſertation VALESIUS ſubjoined to his edition of the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of EUSEBIUS. THOM. ITTIGIUS's *Hiſtory of Donatiſm*, which is publiſhed in the Appendix to his book concerning the *Hereſies of the apoſtolic age*. HERM. WITSIUS, *Miſcellan. Sacror.* tom. i. lib. iv. p. 742. HENR. NORIS, *Hiſt. Donatian.* augmented by the BALLERINI opp. tom. iv. p. xlv. LONG's *Hiſtory of the Donatiſts*, London 1677, 8vo. Theſe are the ſources from whence we have drawn the accounts that we have given of this troubleſome ſect.

IX. The

IX. The faction of the Donatiſts was not the only one that troubled the church during this century. Soon after its commencement, even in the year 317, a new contention aroſe in *Egypt*, upon a ſubject of much higher importance, and with conſequences of a yet more pernicious nature. The ſubject of this fatal controverſy, which kindled ſuch deplorable diviſions throughout the Chriſtian world, was the doctrine of *three perſons in the Godhead*; a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, had happily eſcaped the vain curioſity of human reſearches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular ſet of ideas. The church, indeed, had frequently decided againſt the Sabellians and others, that there was a real difference between the *Father* and the *Son*, and that the *Holy Ghoſt* was diſtinct from them both; or, as we commonly ſpeak, that three diſtinct perſons exiſt in the Deity; but the mutual relation of theſe perſons to each other, and the nature of that diſtinction that ſubſiſts between them, are matters that hitherto were neither diſputed nor explained, and with reſpect to which the church had, conſequently, obſerved a profound ſilence. Nothing was dictated to the faith of Chriſtians in this matter; nor were there any modes of expreſſion preſcribed as requiſite to be uſed in ſpeaking of this myſtery. Hence it happened, that the Chriſtian doctors entertained different ſentiments upon this ſubject without giving the leaſt offence, and diſcourſed variouſly, concerning the diſtinctions between *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*; each one following his reſpective opinion with the utmoſt liberty. In *Egypt*, and the adjacent countries, the greateſt part embraced in this, as well as in other matters, the opinion of ORIGEN, who held that the *Son* was *in God*, that which *reaſon* is *in man*; and that the *Holy Ghoſt* was nothing more than the *divine energy*, or active

The doctrine of this century concerning the Trinity.

force. This notion is attended with many difficulties; and if it is not propoſed with the utmoſt caution, tends, in a particular manner, to remove all real diſtinction between the perſons in the Godhead, or, in other words, leads directly to Sabellianiſm.

The riſe of Arianiſm.

X. In an aſſembly of the preſbyters of *Alexandria*, the biſhop of that city, whoſe name was ALEXANDER, expreſſed his ſentiments on this head with a high degree of freedom and confidence; and maintained, among other things, that the Son was not only of the ſame eminence and dignity, but alſo of the ſame eſſence, with the Father [*l*]. This aſſertion was oppoſed by ARIUS, one of the preſbyters, a man of a ſubtile turn, and remarkable for his eloquence. Whether his zeal for his own opinions, or perſonal reſentment againſt his biſhop, was the motive that influenced him, is not very certain. Be that as it will, he firſt treated, as falſe, the aſſertion of ALEXANDER, on account of its affinity to the Sabellian errors, which had been condemned by the church; and then, running himſelf into the oppoſite extreme, he maintained, that the *Son* was totally and *eſſentially* diſtinct from the *Father*; that he was the *firſt* and *nobleſt* of thoſe beings, whom God the *Father* had created out of nothing, the inſtrument by whoſe ſubordinate operation the almighty Father formed the univerſe, and therefore inferior to the Father both in *nature* and in *dignity*. His opinions concerning the *Holy Ghoſt* are not ſo well known. It is however certain, that his notion concerning the *Son of God* was accompanied and connected with other ſentiments, that were very different from thoſe commonly received among Chriſtians, though none of the ancient writers have given us

[*l*] See SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. v. THEODORET. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. ii.

a com-

a complete and coherent ſyſtem of thoſe religious tenets which were really held by ARIUS and his followers [*m*].

The progreſs of the Arian ſect.

XI. The opinions of ARIUS were no ſooner divulged, than they found in *Egypt*, and the neighbouring provinces, a multitude of abettors, and among theſe many who were diſtinguiſhed as much by the ſuperiority of their learning and genius, as by the eminence of their rank and ſtation in the world. ALEXANDER, on the other hand, in two councils aſſembled at *Alexandria*, accuſed ARIUS of impiety, and cauſed him to be expelled from the communion of the church. ARIUS received this ſevere and ignominious ſhock with great firmneſs and conſtancy of mind; retired into *Paleſtine*; wrote from thence ſeveral letters to the moſt eminent men of thoſe times, in which he endeavoured to demonſtrate the truth of his opinions, and that with ſuch ſurpriſing ſucceſs, that vaſt numbers were drawn over to his party; and among theſe EUSEBIUS, biſhop of *Ni-*

[*m*] For an account of the Arian controverſy, the curious reader muſt conſult the *Life of Conſtantine*, by EUSEBIUS; the various libels of ATHANASIUS, which are to be found in the firſt volume of his works; the *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtories of* SOCRATES, SOZOMEN, and THEODORET, the 69th *Hereſy* of EPIPHANIUS, and other writers of this and the following age. But among all theſe, there is none to whom the merit of impartiality can be attributed with juſtice; ſo that the Arian Hiſtory ſtands yet in need of a pen guided by integrity and candour, and unbiaſſed by affection or hatred. Both ſides have deſerved reproach upon this head: and thoſe who have hitherto written the hiſtory of the Arian controverſy, have only eſpied the faults of one ſide; *e. g.* it is a common opinion, that ARIUS was too much attached to the opinions of PLATO and ORIGEN (ſee *Petav. Dogm. Theol.* tom. ii. lib. i. cap. viii.); but this common opinion is a vulgar error. ORIGEN and PLATO entertained notions entirely different from thoſe of ARIUS; whereas ALEXANDER, his antagoniſt, undoubtedly followed the manner of ORIGEN, in explaining the doctrine of the *three perſons*. See CUDWORTH's *Intellectual Syſtem of the Univerſe*.

*comedia*,

*comedia*, a man distinguished in the church by his influence and authority. The emperor CONSTANTINE, looking upon the subject of this controversy as a matter of small importance, and as little connected with the fundamental and essential doctrines of religion, contented himself at first with addressing a letter to the contending parties, in which he admonished them to put an end to their disputes. But when the prince saw that his admonitions were without effect, and that the troubles and commotions, which the passions of men too often mingle with religious disputes, were spreading and increasing daily throughout the empire, he assembled, at length, in the year 325, the famous council of *Nice* in *Bithynia*, wherein the deputies of the church universal were summoned to put an end to this controversy. In this general council, after many keen debates, and violent efforts of the two parties, the doctrine of ARIUS was condemned; CHRIST declared *consubstantial* [*n*], or of the same essence, with the Father; the vanquished presbyter banished among the Illyrians, and his followers compelled to give their assent to the creed [*o*], or confession of faith, which was composed by this council.

The council of *Nice*.

XII. The council assembled by CONSTANTINE at *Nice*, is one of the most famous and interesting events that are presented to us in ecclesiastical history; and yet, what is most surprising, there is no part of the history of the church that has been unfolded with such negligence, or rather passed over with such rapidity [*p*]. The ancient writers are

[*n*] Ὁμοούσιος.

[*o*] JOHN CHRIST. SUICER has illustrated this famous creed from several important and ancient records, in a very learned book published in 4to. at *Utrecht*, in the year 1718.

[*p*] See ITTIGII *Historia Concilii Nicæni*, which was published after his death. LE CLERC, *Bibliotheque Histor. et Universelle*, tom. x. p. 421. tom. xxii. p. 291. BEAUSOBRE, *Histoire de Manichée, et de Manicheisme*, tom. i. p. 520. The accounts,

are neither agreed concerning the time nor place in which it was aſſembled, the number of thoſe who ſat in council, nor the biſhop who preſided in it. No authentic acts of its famous ſentence have been committed to writing, or, at leaſt, none have been tranſmitted to our times [q].

The eaſtern Chriſtians differ from all others both concerning the number and nature of the laws that were enacted in this celebrated council. The latter mention only twenty *canons*; but in the eſtimate of the former, they amount to a much greater number [r]. It appears, however, by thoſe laws, which all parties have admitted as genuine, and alſo from other authentic records, not only that ARIUS was condemned in this council, but that ſome other points were determined, and certain meaſures agreed upon, to calm the religious tumults that had ſo long troubled the church. The controverſy concerning the time of celebrating Eaſter was terminated [s]; the troubles which NOVATIAN had excited, by oppoſing the re-admiſſion of the *lapſed* to the communion of the church, were compoſed; the Meletian ſchiſm

accounts, which the Oriental writers have given of this council, have been collected by EUSEB. RENAUDOT, in his *Hiſtory of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, p. 69.

[q] See the *Annotations of* VALESIUS *upon the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of* EUSEBIUS, p. 223. JOS. SIM. ASSEMAN. *Bibl. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 195. The hiſtory of this council was written by MARUTHAS, a Syrian, but is long ſince loſt.

[r] TH. ITTIGIUS, *Supplem. opp. Clement. Alex.* p. 191. JOS. SIM. ASSEMAN. *Biblioth. Orient. Clement. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 22. 195. EUSEB. RENAUDOT. *Hiſtor. Patriarch. Alexandrinor.* p. 71.

☞ [s] The deciſion, with reſpect to Eaſter, was in favour of the cuſtom of the weſtern churches; and accordingly all churches were ordered to celebrate that feſtival on the Sunday which immediately followed the 14th of the firſt moon that happened after the vernal equinox.

CENT. IV. PART II.

was condemned [*t*]; the juriſdiction of the greater biſhops preciſely defined and determined [*u*]; with ſeveral other matters of a like nature. But while theſe good prelates were employing all their zeal and attention to correct the miſtakes and errors of others, they were upon the point of falling into a very capital one themſelves. For they had almoſt come to a reſolution of impoſing upon the clergy the yoke of perpetual celibacy, when PAPHNUTIUS put a ſtop to their proceedings, and warded off that unnatural law [*w*].

The hiſtory of Arianiſm after the council of *Nice*.

XIII. But notwithſtanding all theſe determinations, the commotions excited by this controverſy remained yet in the minds of many, and the ſpirit of diſſenſion and controverſy triumphed both over the decrees of the council and the authority of the

☞ [*t*] MELETIUS, biſhop of *Lycopolis* in *Egypt*, was accuſed and convicted of having offered *incenſe to idols*; and, in conſequence thereof, was depoſed by PETER, biſhop of *Alexandria*, whoſe juriſdiction extended throughout all *Egypt*. MELETIUS, upon this, became the head of a ſchiſm in the church, by aſſuming to himſelf the power of ordination, which was veſted in the biſhop of *Alexandria*, and exerciſed by him in all the *Egyptian churches*. EPIPHANIUS attributes the diſſenſions between MELETIUS and PETER to another cauſe (*Hær.* 68.): he alleges, that the vigorous proceedings of PETER againſt MELETIUS were occaſioned by the latter's refuſing to re-admit into the church thoſe who had fallen from the faith during DIOCLETIAN's perſecution, before their penitential trial was entirely finiſhed. The former opinion is maintained by SOCRATES and THEODORET, whoſe authority is certainly more reſpectable than that of EPIPHANIUS.

☞ [*u*] The confuſion that MELETIUS introduced, by preſuming (as was obſerved in the preceding note) to violate the juriſdiction of PETER, the metropolitan of *Alexandria*, by conferring *ordination* in a province where he alone had a right to ordain, was rectified by the council of *Nice*, which determined, that the metropolitan biſhops, in their reſpective provinces, ſhould have the ſame power and authority that the biſhop of *Rome* exerciſed over the Suburbicarian churches and countries.

[*w*] SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. viii. compared with FRANC. BALDUINUS, *in Conſtant. Magn.* and GEORGE CALIXTUS, *De conjugio clericorum*, p. 170.

emperor,

emperor. For thoſe who, in the main, were far from being attached to the party of ARIUS, found many things reprehenſible both in the decrees of the council, and in the forms of expreſſion which it employed to explain the controverted points; while the Arians, on the other hand, left no means untried to heal their wound, and to recover their place and their credit in the church. And their efforts were crowned with the deſired ſucceſs. For a few years after the council of *Nice*, a certain Arian prieſt, who had been recommended to the emperor, in the dying words of his ſiſter CONSTANTIA, found means to perſuade CONSTANTINE the GREAT, that the condemnation of ARIUS was utterly unjuſt, and was rather owing to the malice of his enemies, than to their zeal for the truth. In conſequence of this, the emperor recalled him from baniſhment in the year 330 [*x*],

☞ [*x*] The preciſe time, in which ARIUS was recalled from baniſhment, has not been fixed with ſuch perfect certainty as to prevent a diverſity of ſentiments on that head. The *annotations* of the learned VALESIUS (or VALOIS) upon SOZOMEN'S *Hiſtory*, p. 10 and 11. will caſt ſome light upon this matter, and make it probable, that Dr. MOSHEIM has placed the recall of ARIUS too late, at leaſt by two years. VALESIUS has proved, from the authority of PHILOSTORGIUS, and from other moſt reſpectable monuments and records, that EUSEBIUS of *Nicomedia*, and THEOGNIS, who were baniſhed by the emperor about three months after the council of *Nice*, *i. e.* in the year 325, were recalled in the year 328. Now, in the *writing* by which they obtained their return, they pleaded the reſtoration of ARIUS as an argument for theirs, which proves that he was recalled before the year 330. The ſame VALESIUS proves, that ARIUS, the firſt head of the Arian ſect, was dead before the council of *Tyre*, which was tranſferred to *Jeruſalem*; and that the letters which CONSTANTINE addreſſed to that council in favour of ARIUS and his followers, were in behalf of a ſecond chief of that name, who put himſelf at the head of the Arians, and who, in conjunction with EUZOIUS, preſented to CONSTANTINE ſuch a confeſſion of their faith, as made him imagine their doctrine to be orthodox, and procured their reconciliation with the church at the council of *Jeruſalem*. See *Annot. Valeſ. ad Hiſt. Socrat.* lib. i. cap. xxxiii. p. 16.

CENT. IV. PART II.

repealed the laws that had been enacted againſt him, and permitted his chief protector, EUSEBIUS of *Nicomedia*, and his vindictive faction, to vex and oppreſs the partiſans of the *Nicene* council in various ways. ATHANASIUS, biſhop of *Alexandria*, was one of thoſe who ſuffered moſt from the violent meaſures of the Arian party. Invincibly firm in his purpoſe, and deaf to the moſt powerful ſolicitations and entreaties, he obſtinately refuſed to reſtore ARIUS to his former rank and office. On this account he was depoſed, by the council held at *Tyre*, in the year 335, and was afterwards baniſhed into *Gaul*, while ARIUS and his followers were, with great ſolemnity, reinſtated in their privileges, and received into the communion of the church. The people of *Alexandria*, unmoved by theſe proceedings in favour of ARIUS, perſiſted to refuſe him a place among their preſbyters; upon which the emperor invited him to *Conſtantinople* in the year 336, and ordered ALEXANDER, the biſhop of that city, to admit him to his communion. But before this order could be put in execution, ARIUS died at *Conſtantinople* in a very diſmal manner [*y*], and the em-

☞ [*y*] The diſmal manner in which ARIUS is ſaid to have expired, by his entrails falling out as he was diſcharging one of the natural functions, is a fact that has been called in queſtion by ſome modern writers, though without foundation, ſince it is confirmed by the unexceptionable teſtimonies of SOCRATES, SOZOMEN, ATHANASIUS, and others. The cauſes of this tragical death have, however, furniſhed much matter of diſpute. The ancient writers, who conſidered this event as a judgment of Heaven, miraculouſly drawn down, by the prayers of the juſt, to puniſh the impiety of ARIUS, will find little credit, in our times, among ſuch as have ſtudied with attention and impartiality the hiſtory of Arianiſm. After having conſidered this matter with the utmoſt care, it appears to me extremely probable, that this unhappy man was a victim to the reſentment of his enemies, and was deſtroyed by poiſon, or ſome ſuch violent method. A blind and fanatical zeal for certain ſyſtems of faith has, in all ages, produced ſuch horrible acts of cruelty and injuſtice.

peror

peror CONSTANTINE ſurvived him but a ſhort time.

Under the ſons of Conſtantine.

XIV. After the death of CONSTANTINE the GREAT, one of his ſons, CONSTANTIUS, who, in the diviſion of the empire, became ruler of the eaſt, was warmly attached to the Arian party, whoſe principles were alſo zealouſly adopted by the empreſs, and, indeed, by the whole court. On the other hand, CONSTANTINE and CONSTANS, emperors of the weſt, maintained the decrees of the council of *Nice* throughout all the provinces where their juriſdiction extended. Hence aroſe endleſs animoſities and ſeditions, treacherous plots, and open acts of injuſtice and violence between the two contending parties. Council was aſſembled againſt council, and their jarring and contradictory decrees ſpread perplexity and confuſion throughout the Chriſtian world.

In the year 350, CONSTANS was aſſaſſinated; and about two years after this, a great part of the weſtern empire, particularly *Rome* and *Italy*, fell into the hands of his brother CONSTANTIUS. This change was extremely unfavourable to thoſe who adhered to the decrees of the council of *Nice*. The emperor's attachment to the Arians animated him againſt their adverſaries, whom he involved in various troubles and calamities, and obliged many of them, by threats and puniſhment, to come over to the ſect which he eſteemed and protected. Among theſe forced proſelytes was LIBERIUS the Roman pontif, who was compelled to embrace Arianiſm in the year 357. The Nicene party meditated repriſals, and waited only a convenient time, a fit place, and a proper occaſion, for executing their reſentment. Thus the hiſtory of the church, under the emperor CONSPANTIUS, preſents to the reader a perpetual

CENT. IV. PART II.

ſcene of tumult and violence, and the deplorable ſpectacle of a war carried on between brothers, without religion, juſtice, or humanity.

Under Julian and Jovian.

XV. The death of CONSTANTIUS, in the year 362, changed conſiderably the face of religious affairs, and diminiſhed greatly the ſtrength and influence of the Arian party. JULIAN, who, by his principles, was naturally prevented from taking a part in the controverſy, beſtowed his protection on neither ſide, but treated them both with an impartiality which was the reſult of a perfect indifference. JOVIAN, his ſucceſſor, declared himſelf in favour of the Nicene doctrine; and immediately the whole weſt, with a conſiderable part of the eaſtern provinces, changed ſides, conformed to the decrees of the council of *Nice*, and abjured the Arian ſyſtem.

Under Valentinian and Valens.

The ſcene however changed again in the year 364, when VALENTINIAN, and his brother VALENS, were raiſed to the empire. VALENTINIAN adhered to the decrees of the Nicene council; and hence the whole Arian ſect, a few churches excepted, was deſtroyed and extirpated in the weſt. VALENS, on the other hand, favoured the Arians; and his zeal for their cauſe expoſed their adverſaries the Nicenians, in the eaſtern provinces, to many ſevere trials and ſufferings. Theſe troubles, however, ended with the reign of this emperor, who fell in a battle which was fought againſt the Goths in the year 378, and was ſucceeded by GRATIAN, a friend to the Nicenians, and the reſtorer of their tranquillity. His zeal for their intereſts, though fervent and active, was ſurpaſſed by that of his ſucceſſor, THEODOSIUS the GREAT, who raiſed the ſecular arm againſt the Arians, with a terrible degree of violence, drove them from their churches, enacted laws, whoſe ſeverity expoſed them to the greateſt calamities,

ties [z], and rendered, throughout his dominions, the decrees of the council of *Nice* triumphant over all oppoſition; ſo that the public profeſſion of the Arian doctrine was confined to the barbarous and unconquered nations, ſuch as the Burgundians, Goths, and Vandals.

During this long and violent conteſt between the Nicenians and Arians, the attentive and impartial will acknowledge, that unjuſtifiable meaſures were taken, and great exceſſes committed on both ſides. So that when, abſtracting from the merits of the cauſe, we only conſider with what temper, and by what means, the parties defended their reſpective opinions, it will be difficult to determine which of the two exceeded moſt the bounds of probity, charity, and moderation.

Various ſects of Arians.

XVI. The efforts of the Arians to maintain their cauſe, would have been much more prejudicial to the church than they were in effect, had not the members of that ſect been divided among themſelves, and torn into factions, which regarded each other with the bittereſt averſion. Of theſe, the ancient writers make mention under the names of Semi-arians, Euſebians, Aëtians, Eunomians, Acaſians, Pſathyrians, and others: but they may all be ranked, with the utmoſt propriety, into three claſſes. The firſt of theſe were the primitive and genuine Arians, who rejecting all thoſe forms and modes of expreſſion which the moderns had invented to render their opinions leſs ſhocking to the Nicenians, taught ſimply, "That "the Son *was not begotten of the Father* (i. e. "produced out of his ſubſtance), *but only created* "*out of nothing.*" This claſs was oppoſed by the Semi-arians, who, in their turn, were abandoned by the Eunomians or Anomæans, the diſciples of ÆTIUS and EUNOMIUS, of whom the latter was eminent for his knowledge and penetration.

[z] See *Codex Theodoſianus*, tom. vi. p. 5. 10. 130. 146; as alſo GODOFRED's Annotations thereupon.

CENT. IV. PART II.

The Semi-arians held, *that the Son was* ὁμοιούσιος, i. e. *ſimilar to the Father in his eſſence, not by nature, but by a peculiar privilege*; and the leading men of this party were, GEORGE of *Laodicea*, and BASILIUS of *Ancyra* [*a*]. The Eunomians, who were alſo called Aëtians and Exucontians, and may be counted in the number of pure Arians, maintained, that CHRIST was ἑτεροούσιος, or ἀνόμοιος, *i. e.* unlike the Father, as well in his eſſence, as in other reſpects [*b*]. Under this general diviſion, many other ſubordinate ſects were comprehended, whoſe ſubtilties and refinements have been but obſcurely developed by the ancient writers. The Arian cauſe ſuffered as much from the diſcord and animoſities that reigned among theſe ſects, as from the laboured confutations and the zealous efforts of the orthodox party.

XVII. The Arian controverſy produced new ſects, occaſioned by the indiſcreet lengths to which the contending parties puſhed their reſpective opinions. And ſuch, indeed, are too generally the unhappy effects of diſputes, in which human paſſions have ſo large a part. Some, while they were careful in avoiding, and zealous in oppoſing, the ſentiments of ARIUS, ran headlong into ſyſtems of doctrine of an equally dangerous and pernicious nature. Others, in defending the Arian notions, went further than their chief, and thus fell into errors much more extravagant than thoſe which he maintained. Thus does it generally happen in religious controverſies: the human mind, amidſt its preſent imperfection and infirmity, and its unhappy ſubjection

The Apollinarian hereſy.

[*a*] See PRUD. MARAN'S *Diſſert. ſur les Semi-ariens*, of which the learned VOIGT has given a ſecond edition in his *Biblioth. Hæreſiolog.* tom. ii. p. 119.

[*b*] See BASNAGE'S *Diſſert. de Eunomio*, in the *Lectiones Antiquæ* of CANISIUS, tom. i. p. 172, where we find the *confeſſion* and *apology* of EUNOMIUS yet extant. See alſo Jo. ALB. FABRIC. *Bibliotheca Græc.* vol. viii. p. 100—148, and the *Codex Theodoſ.* tom. vi. p. 147. 155. 157. 167. 200, &c.

to the empire of imagination and the dictates of ſenſe, rarely follows the middle way in the ſearch of truth, or contemplates ſpiritual and divine things with that accurateneſs and ſimplicity, that integrity and moderation, which alone can guard againſt erroneous extremes.

Among thoſe who fell into ſuch extremes by their inconſiderate violence in oppoſing the Arian ſyſtem, APOLLINARIS the younger, biſhop of *Laodicea*, may be juſtly placed, though otherwiſe a man of diſtinguiſhed merit, and one whoſe learned labours had rendered to religion the moſt important ſervices. He defended ſtrenuouſly the *divinity* of CHRIST againſt the Arians; but, by indulging himſelf too freely in philoſophical diſtinctions and ſubtilties, he was carried ſo far as to deny, in ſome meaſure, his *humanity*. He maintained that the body, which CHRIST aſſumed, was endowed with a *ſenſitive*, and not a *rational*, ſoul; and that the Divine Nature performed the functions of reaſon, and ſupplied the place of what we call the *mind*, the ſpiritual and intellectual principle in man. And from this it ſeemed to follow as a natural conſequence, that the *Divine Nature* in CHRIST was blended with the *human*, and ſuffered with it the pains of crucifixion and death itſelf [*c*]. This great man was led aſtray, not only by his love of diſputing, but alſo by an immoderate attachment to the Platonic doctrine, concerning the two-fold nature of the ſoul, which was too generally adopted by the divines of this age; and which, undoubtedly, perverted their judgment in ſeveral reſpects, and led them to erroneous and extravagant deciſions on various ſubjects.

☞ [*c*] However erroneous the hypotheſis of APOLLINARIS may have been, the conſequences here drawn from it are not entirely juſt; for if it is true, that the human ſoul does not, in any reſpect, ſuffer death by the diſſolution of the body, the ſame muſt hold good with reſpect to the divine nature.

Other errors, beſide that now mentioned, are imputed to APOLLINARIS by certain ancient writers; but it is not eaſy to determine how far they deſerve credit upon that head [*d*]. Be that as it will, his doctrine was received by great numbers in almoſt all the eaſtern provinces, though by the different explications that were given of it, its votaries were ſubdivided into various ſects. It did not, however, maintain its ground long; but, being attacked at the ſame time by the laws of the emperors, the decrees of councils, and the writings of the learned, it ſunk, by degrees, under their united force.

Marcellus of Ancyra.

XVIII. MARCELLUS, biſhop of *Ancyra* in *Galatia*, may be ranked in the ſame claſs with APOLLINARIS, if we are to give credit to EUSEBIUS of *Cæſarea*, and the reſt of his adverſaries, who repreſent his explication of the doctrine of the Trinity as bordering upon the Sabellian and Samoſatenian errors. Many however are of opinion, that EUSEBIUS of *Cæſarea*, and the biſhop of *Nicomedia*, who bore the ſame name, repreſented with partiality the ſentiments of MARCELLUS, on account of the bitterneſs and vehemence which he diſcovered in his oppoſition to the Arians, and their protectors. But though it ſhould be acknowledged, that, in ſome particulars, the accuſations of his enemies carried an aſpect of partiality and reſentment, yet it is manifeſt, that they were far from being entirely groundleſs. For, if the doctrine of MARCELLUS be attentively examined, it will appear, that he

[*d*] See BASNAGE's *Hiſtoria Hæreſis Apollinaris*, publiſhed a ſecond time by VOIGT, in his *Bibliotheca Hæreſiologica*, tom. i. faſcic. i. p. 1–96. and improved by ſome learned and important additions. See alſo tom. i. faſcic. iii. and p. 607. of this latter work. The laws that were enacted againſt the followers of APOLLINARIS, are extant in the *Theodoſian Code*, tom. vi. p. 144. See an account of APOLLINARIS, and his *Hereſy*, in the Engliſh edition of BAYLE's *Dictionary*, at the article APOLLINARIS.

conſidered the *Son* and the *Holy Ghoſt* as *two emanations* from the Divine Nature, which, after performing their reſpective offices, were to return again into the *ſubſtance* of the Father; and every one will perceive, at firſt ſight, how incompatible this opinion is with the belief of *three diſtinct Perſons in the Godhead.* Beſides this, a particular circumſtance, which augmented conſiderably the averſion of many to MARCELLUS, as alſo the ſuſpicion of his erring in a capital manner, was his obſtinately refuſing, towards the concluſion of his life, to condemn the tenets of his diſciple PHOTINUS [*e*].

The ſect of Photinus.

XIX. PHOTINUS, biſhop of *Sirmium*, may, with propriety, be placed at the head of thoſe whom the Arian controverſy was the occaſion of ſeducing into the moſt extravagant errors. This prelate publiſhed, in the year 343, his opinions concerning the Deity, which were equally repugnant to the Orthodox and Arian ſyſtems. His notions, which have been but obſcurely, and indeed ſometimes inconſiſtently, repreſented by the ancient writers, amount to this, when attentively examined: "That JESUS CHRIST was born of "the HOLY GHOST and the Virgin MARY; that "a certain *divine emanation*, or ray (which he "called the *word*) deſcended upon this extraordinary man; that, on account of the union of "the *divine word* with his *human nature*, JESUS "was called the *Son of God*, nay, *God* himſelf; "and that the *Holy Ghoſt* was not a diſtinct *perſon*, but a celeſtial *virtue* proceeding from the "Deity." The temerity of this bold innovator was chaſtiſed, not only by the Orthodox in the councils of *Antioch* [*f*] and *Milan*, held in the years

[*e*] See MONTFAUCON's *Diatriba de Cauſſa Marcelli in Nova Collectione Patrum Græcorum*, tom. ii. p. 51; as alſo GERVAISE, *Vie de S. Epiphane*, p. 42.

[*f*] According to Dr. LARDNER's account, this council

years 345 and 347, and in that of *Sirmium*, whoſe date is uncertain, but alſo by the Arians in one of their aſſemblies held at *Sirmium*, in the year 351. In conſequence of all this, PHOTINUS was degraded from the epiſcopal dignity, and died in exile in the year 372 [*g*].

The hereſy of Macedonius.

XX. After him aroſe MACEDONIUS, biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, a very eminent Semi-arian doctor, who, through the influence of the Eunomians, was depoſed by the council of *Conſtantinople*, in the year 360, and ſent into exile, where he formed the ſect of the Macedonians, or Pneumatomachians. In his exile, he declared with the utmoſt freedom thoſe ſentiments which he had formerly either concealed, or, at leaſt, taught with much circumſpection. He conſidered the *Holy Ghoſt* as "a *divine energy* diffuſed throughout the uni-"verſe, and not as a *perſon* diſtinct from the "*Father* and the *Son* [*b*]." This opinion had many partiſans in the Aſiatic provinces; but the council aſſembled by THEODOSIUS, in the year 381, at *Conſtantinople* (to which the ſecond rank among the *œcumenical* or general councils is commonly attributed), put a ſtop by its authority to the growing evil, and cruſhed this riſing ſect before it had arrived at its full maturity. An hundred and fifty biſhops, who were preſent at this council, gave the finiſhing touch to what the council of *Nice* had left imperfect, and fixed, in a full and determinate manner, the doctrine

cil of *Antioch*, in 345, was held by the Arians, or Euſebians, and not by the Orthodox, as our author affirms. See LARDNER's *Credibility*, &c. vol. ix. p. 13; ſee alſo ATHANAS. *De Synod. N.* vi. vii. compared with SOCRAT. lib. ii. cap. xviii, xix.

[*g*] Or in 375, as is concluded from JEROME's *Chronicle*.—MATT. LARROQUE, *De Photino, et ejus multiplici condemnatione*. THOM. ITTIGIUS, *Hiſtoria Photini in App. ad librum de Hæreſiarchis ævi Apoſtolici*.

[*b*] SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. iv.

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of *three* PERSONS *in one* GOD, which is as yet received among the generality of Chriſtians. This venerable aſſembly did not ſtop here; they branded, with infamy, all the errors, and ſet a mark of execration upon all the hereſies, that were hitherto known; they advanced the biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, on account of the eminence and extent of the city in which he reſided, to the firſt rank after the Roman Pontif, and determined ſeveral other points, which they looked upon as eſſential to the well-being of the church in general [*i*].

The Priſcillianiſts.

XXI. The frenzy of the ancient Gnoſtics, which had been ſo often vanquiſhed, and in appearance removed, by the various remedies that had been uſed for that purpoſe, broke out anew in *Spain*. It was tranſported thither, in the beginning of this century, by a certain perſon, named MARC of *Memphis*, in *Egypt*, whoſe converts at firſt were not very numerous. They increaſed, however, in proceſs of time, and counted in their number ſeveral perſons highly eminent for their learning and piety. Among others, PRISCILLIAN, a layman, diſtinguiſhed by his birth, fortune, and eloquence, and afterwards biſhop of *Abila*, was infected with this odious doctrine, and became its moſt zealous and ardent defender. Hence he was accuſed by ſeveral biſhops, and, by a reſcript obtained from the emperor GRATIAN, he was baniſhed, with his followers, from *Spain* [*k*]; but was reſtored, ſome time after,

[*i*] SOCRATES, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. viii. p. 624. SOZOMEN. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vii. cap. vii. p. 711.

☞ [*k*] This baniſhment was the effect of a ſentence pronounced againſt PRISCILLIAN, and ſome of his followers, by a ſynod convened at *Saragoſſa* in the year 380; in conſequence of which, IDACIUS and ITHACIUS, two cruel and perſecuting eccleſiaſtics, obtained from GRATIAN the reſcript abovementioned. See SULPIC. SEVER. *Hiſt. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. xlvii. p. 283. edit. Leipſick, 8vo.

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by an edict of the same prince, to his country and his functions. His sufferings did not end here; for he was accused a second time, in the year 384 [*l*], before MAXIMUS, who had procured the assassination of GRATIAN, and made himself master of *Gaul*; and, by the order of that prince, was put to death, at *Treves*, with some of his associates. The agents, however, by whose barbarous zeal this sentence was obtained, were justly regarded with the utmost abhorrence by the bishops of *Gaul* and *Italy* [*m*]; for Christians had not yet learned, that giving over heretics to be punished by the magistrates, was either an act of piety or justice [*n*]. [No: This abominable doctrine was reserved for those times, when religion was to become an instrument of despotism, or a pretext for the exercise of malevolence, vengeance, and pride.]

The death of PRISCILLIAN was less pernicious to the progress of his opinions, than might na-

☞ [*l*] Upon the death of GRATIAN, who had favoured PRISCILLIAN, towards the latter end of his reign, ITHACIUS presented to MAXIMUS a petition against him; whereupon this prince appointed a *council* to be held at *Bourdeaux*, from which PRISCILLIAN appealed to the prince himself. SULP. SEVER. lib. ii. cap. xlix. p. 287.

☞ [*m*] It may be interesting to the reader to hear the character of the first person that introduced *civil* persecution into the Christian church. "He was a man abandoned to the "most corrupt indolence, and without the least tincture of true "piety. He was audacious, talkative, impudent, luxurious, "and a slave to his belly. He accused as heretics, and as "protectors of PRISCILLIAN, all those whose lives were "consecrated to the pursuit of piety and knowledge, or dis-"tinguished by acts of mortification and abstinence," &c. Such is the character which SULPICIUS SEVERUS, who had an extreme aversion to the sentiments of PRISCILLIAN, gives us of ITHACIUS, bishop of *Soissuba*, by whose means he was put to death.

[*n*] See SULP. SEVER. *Hist. Sacr.* edit. Leipf. 8vo. 1709. where MARTIN, the truly apostolical bishop of *Tours*, says to MAXIMUS, *Novum esse et inauditum nefas ut causam ecclesiæ judex seculi judicaret.* See also *Dial.* iii. *de vitâ Martini*, cap. xi. p. 495.

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turally have been expected. His doctrine not only ſurvived him, but was propagated through the greateſt part of *Spain* and *Gaul*. And, even ſo far down as the ſixth century, the followers of this unhappy man gave much trouble to the biſhops and clergy in theſe provinces.

Their doctrine.

XXII. None of the ancient writers have given an accurate account of the doctrine of the Priſcillianiſts. Many, on the contrary, by their injudicious repreſentations of it, have highly diſfigured it, and added new degrees of obſcurity to a ſyſtem which was before ſufficiently dark and perplexed. It appears, however, from authentic records, that the difference between their doctrine, and that of the Manicheans, was not very conſiderable. For "they denied the *reality* of "CHRIST'S birth and incarnation; maintained, "that the viſible univerſe was not the production "of the Supreme Deity, but of ſome *dæmon*, "or malignant principle; adopted the doctrine "of *æons*, or emanations, from the divine "nature; conſidered human bodies as priſons "formed, by the author of evil, to enſlave "celeſtial minds; condemned marriage, and "diſbelieved the reſurrection of the body." Their rule of life and manners was rigid and ſevere; and the accounts which many have given of their laſciviouſneſs and intemperance deſerve not the leaſt credit, as they are totally deſtitute of evidence and authority. That the Priſcillianiſts were guilty of diſſimulation upon ſome occaſions, and deceived their adverſaries by cunning ſtratagems, is true: but that they held it as a maxim, that lying and perjury were *lawful*, is a moſt notorious falſehood, without even the leaſt ſhadow of probability [o], however commonly this odious doctrine

[o] See SIMON DE VRIES, *Diſſert. Critica de Priſcillianiſtis*, printed at *Utrecht*, in the year 1745, in 4to. The only defect in this diſſertation is the implicit manner in which the author

CENT. IV. PART II.

doctrine has been laid to their charge. In the heat of controverſy, the eye of paſſion and prejudice is too apt to confound the principles and opinions of men with their practice.

Inferior ſects.

XXIII. To what we have here ſaid concerning thoſe famous ſects which made a noiſe in the world, it will not be improper to add ſome account of thoſe of a leſs conſiderable and inferior kind.

ARDÆUS, a man of remarkable virtue, being excommunicated in *Syria*, on account of the freedom and importunity with which he cenſured the corrupt and licentious manners of the clergy, formed an aſſembly of thoſe who were attached to him, and became, by his own appointment, their biſhop. Baniſhed into *Scythia*, by the emperor, he went among the Goths, where his ſect flouriſhed and augmented conſiderably. The ancient writers are not agreed about the time in which we are to date the origin of this ſect. With reſpect to its religious inſtitutions, we know that they differed in ſome points from thoſe obſerved by other Chriſtians: and particularly, that the followers of ARDÆUS celebrated Eaſter, or the Paſchal feaſt, with the Jews, contrary to the expreſs decree of the council of *Nice*. With reſpect to their doctrine, ſeveral errors have been imputed to them [*p*], and this, among others, that they attributed to the Deity a human form.

XXIV.

author follows BEAUSOBRE's *Hiſtory of the Manicheans*, taking every thing for granted which is affirmed in that work. See alſo FRANC. GIRVESII *Hiſtoria Priſcillianiſtarum Chronologica*, publiſhed at *Rome* in the year 1750, in 8vo. We find, moreover, in the twenty-ſeventh volume of the *Opuſculum Scientificum* of ANGELUS CALOGERA, a treatiſe intitled, *Bachiarus Illuſtratus, ſeu de Priſcilliana Hæreſi diſſertatio*; but this diſſertation appears rather intended to clear up the affair of BACHIARUS, than to give a full account of the Priſcillianiſts and their doctrine.

[*p*] EPIPHANIUS, *Hæreſ.* lxx. p. 811. AUGUSTIN. *De Hæreſ.* cap. 1. THEODORET. *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. iv. cap. ix. p. 671.

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